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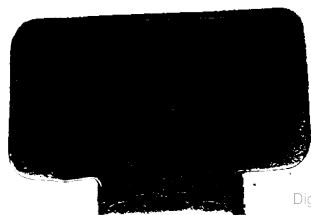
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THE KING
OVER THE WATER

JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY



THE KING OVER THE WATER

OR
THE MARRIAGE OF MR. MELANCHOLY

BY
JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY

AUTHOR OF
"THE PROUD PRINCE" "SERAPHICA"
"IF I WERE KING" ETC.



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DILECTISSIMAE UXORI

THE KING OVER THE WATER

THE KING OVER THE WATER

I

SOME PAGES OF MEMORIES

(There are some pages in the hand of write of Colonel Beamish O'Carroll that can serve aptly for prelude of what is to follow. Colonel O'Carroll held his command in Dillon's regiment in France in the early years of the eighteenth century, and at one time he seems to have taken it into his head—like many another man-at-arms—to write his memoirs. He does not seem to have completed his purpose. The comparatively few sheets of paper which the curious student may find in its portfolio—No. 7119 Xf—in the library of the Archives in Paris are for the most part disconnected, rambling records, apparently hurriedly jotted down to serve as notes for the complete work. But there are some pages that run consecutively and deal with a definite event, and these pages may now for the first time appear in print.)

“I REMEMBER it as well as if it were yesterday
—though, alas! it is not yesterday. I was sitting in the parlor of the inn at Scelestat, leisurely drinking my bottle of wine—a ripe, red wine that

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I favored and still favor. I was alone in the inn parlor. I was tilted back in my chair against the table, the heels of my boots rested on the window-seat, and I was staring out through the tulip-pots at the sleepy little street. I remember very well what I was thinking of. My mind was moody and sullen, I seemed full to the lips of bitter reflections; the red wine could not exorcise my black thoughts.

"It was just one of those fits that come to a man when he finds that he is no longer young and looks back over the faded years and discovers little pleasure in the perspective. 'What was the good of it all?' I asked myself, fretfully. The very wine that I sipped tasted sour at my lips; the book of my life offered little better than a catalogue of calamities and follies. Here I sat, a melancholy trooper drifting along in years, and what had I to show for it all, and what to look forward to? My uniform wore a colonel's epaulettes—that summed up the past; as for the future the prospect of being knocked on the head in some scuffle looked to be the most probable solution of the speculation. Anyway, it seemed to me that the best of the business was over, and that the best was unsatisfactory enough. I was an exile, a stranger in a strange land, speaking for the most part an alien speech, serving a foreign flag. I grumbled as I drank, and it was a waste of good liquor to use it in such a fashion.

"Of course I had had my pleasures and liked them at the time, but they seemed tasteless in the recol-

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lection to my discontented spirit. The comrades, the hard knocks taken and given, the marches, the brawls, the gambling and the drinking and the laughing, the drumming and the fife and the fighting, all the things that go to make up a soldier's life and, for the most part, that content or should content a soldier, seemed of a sudden to have lost their savor. If here and there a pretty face peeped up at me out of my memories, if I recalled roguish lips that had given and taken hearty kisses, the thought of them only served to swell my despondency.

"I had never met my heart's desire nor, as I supposed, ever should. I had loved as a trooper loves, here, there, and everywhere, with never a heart-ache and scarce a regret. Now, I was at the end of my tether, so I assured myself dully; the game was played, the money paid, nothing left to look for but bed and sleep. 'My loves are buried,' said I to myself, 'my adventures ended, romance has walked out of my world forever; nothing is left for the poor old Put but bed and sleep.' And, as I remember, I sighed very dismally to think that all was ended and done with, and just as I sighed the door of the inn parlor opened, and creaked in opening. At all times I dislike a creaking door, but just then, being steeped in my distempered broodings and vexed at being disturbed in them, it jarred upon me amazingly, and so I turned my head testily. As I say, the door opened, and I greeted its opening with a frown. But my frown instantly faded to a smile

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and the smile brightened to a salutation of a familiar face, a face very unexpected in that place and hour. It was the face of my very near and dear friend and very distant kinsman, my close comrade and admired hero, Charles Wogan.

"I have always loved my countrymen, and some of them have given the French king as fine a body of fighting fellows as ever drew a sword or fired a pistol. But of them all there never stepped a gallanter gentleman than Charles Wogan. As he stood there, framed in the open doorway, in his brightly colored habit, with his right hand stretched out in greeting, and his fine face smiling upon me, he seemed the very pattern of a soldier and a man, and my heart drummed a welcome. My black mood seemed to fall away from me like a discarded cloak at the sight of him, and I was out of my chair and holding him by the hand before he had stepped a pace into the room.

"If I was glad to see him, he seemed to the full as delighted to see me. He returned my grasp with a wring that impressed itself even upon my seasoned wrist. He clapped me on the shoulder with his disengaged left hand and looked me in the eyes with such a smiling salutation that my heavy, lumpish body seemed suddenly to wear wings for sheer pleasure at the meeting. My kinsman began to speak before I had time to utter a syllable, and the sound of his voice was as cheering as the light in his eyes.

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“‘You are the very man I have been longing to see,’ so the dear gentleman began. ‘I have ridden hard for this meeting, and as I serve God, I think we are well met. When I found you were not at your rooms, I was in a rage, but, by Heaven’s grace, I fell across your servant, who told me that I should be most likely to find you here at this hour of the day.’ It struck me that it was no small liberty for my servant to speak thus freely of my ways. A gentleman may take his glass in his inn without becoming the subject of a lackey’s gossip. But still, it had brought my friend to me, and that was so much to the good, for me, who always rejoiced to see him, and for him, too, as his words and manner showed. I told him very straightly that I was heartily glad to hold his hand and that in all things I was at his service.

“‘Don’t be so rash,’ he retorted, with a rallying smile. ‘Who knows but I may have a favor to ask of you?’

“I knew very well that I assured him with the heat of a great fervor that I was always his in all things to command. Indeed, it was a way with Wogan to command men, and of all men, to command me, for all that I was his elder in arms. Though I know myself, I think, as well as the Greek sage—or was he a Roman sage?—could wish, and know myself to be a tetchy, testy, petulant, peevish, plaguey, fractious fellow when my ill moods are upon me, I know also that the sunlight of a friendly

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face, and the music of a friendly voice, can always banish my black vapors and make me ready for anything. In this instance the sunlight of a friendly face beamed hotly, for I loved Charles Wogan better than a brother, and in this instance the music of a friendly voice pealed with a special insistence. For I knew at once from the tone of the man's voice that he had something very important to say, and I felt in the very core of my heart how great a compliment it was that he had chosen to say it to me.

"Charles Wogan seated himself at my table and helped himself to my wine. It was no bad drinking; it could have been better; still it served; but it might have been Hippocras or Hippocrene, or whatever the name of the antique liquor was, for the way in which Wogan savored it and smiled at me over the lip of the beaker. In truth, he was tired enough and thirsty enough after his long journey to enjoy a coarser vintage. But for the moment his main point, as I learned thereafter, was to please me to his purpose, and win me to his will, and for getting on the soft side of a man, be he soldier or be he civilian, what better way is there than to praise his tippie and to drain it down with an air of relish? My dear friend was ever a delicate drinker, a fop with the flagon, choosing rather the best and little than good and much or middling and plenty. But he sipped my red wine with a satisfaction that transfused itself from him

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to me, so that I seemed to taste at once the warmth of the wine and the warmth of his appreciation of it. Thus I was primed and ready to oblige him. He sat silent for a while as he sipped; indeed, he sat silent so long—at least it seemed long to me in my impatience—that at last I broke in upon his quiet.

“‘Well,’ I said, ‘what’s in the wind now?’ And I filled his glass again as I asked the question.

“He looked up at me with a new light of laughter in his grave gray eyes. ‘So we are curious,’ he said. ‘Yet I dare swear that your curiosity does not aim so high as my secret. If I sat silent so long, it was for thinking what a business I was about, and what a need I have for a good turn from my old friend and comrade.’

“As he spoke he leaned over across the table and gripped me by the wrist. He had fingers that closed like a claw of steel, even when their pressure was friendly, as it now was. The smile had slipped from his face, and his expression was all earnest and alert.

“‘My dear old friend,’ he said, ‘loved leader and true brother-in-arms’—if I set down these phrases it is because he used them, and because for all that I was an old soldier they made me red with pleasure—‘this business is not my business, but king’s business. You may have heard that his Majesty wishes to wed?’

“Now, it was matter of common talk all over

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Europe that his sacred Majesty James the Third, King of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, was most anxious to form some alliance that might serve him well against the Hanoverian usurper, and I guessed at once that Wogan's business was of this kind. So I just nodded my head, and Wogan went on with his story.

"'You know as well as I do,' said my friend, 'that his Majesty has had no more troublesome adversary in his attempts to regain his rightful crown than the Empire. So it came into his Majesty's mind, which is a great mind and a wonderful, that if he could make a match with some princess of the Empire he might raise himself up a party in Germany that would serve him excellently well against our bad and little-loved cousin the Elector.'

"I nodded acquiescence, but to be wholly frank, I was hard put to it to stifle a yawn. All these diplomacies, these chancellery devices, these marriage schemes, seemed to me no way to win back a throne. Wogan and I had fought in the Fifteen; Wogan had been taken; Wogan had only saved his neck by breaking prison from Newgate. We had failed in the Fifteen, but we might win next time in the brave way with swords drawn and standard flying, not with intrigue and alliances. So I began to find my friend's story lacking in the interest I had expected. Which only showed that I did not know the man as well as I thought I did,

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“Wogan leaned over to me, and as if fearful that the walls of the inn parlor might have ears, he spoke in a low voice that was indeed little better than a whisper, yet that was, nevertheless, as clear as any bell. He told me a state secret, the secret of the King’s intended marriage; he told me of the shameful treachery which strove to thwart it, and I listened, aggrieved and indignant. But when he had come to the end of this part of his tale, leaving, as it seemed to me, a royal plan hopelessly miscarried, he began again, and revealed to me a certain purpose of his own, which all the world knows of now, but which I was one of the first half-dozen or so—and all the others deep in the King’s counsels—to receive knowledge of at that time.

“For the moment I was unmanned, bewildered, taken by surprise, what you will. Wogan had always seemed to me such a man as the Latin poet would have praised—a man with a sound mind in a sound body—yet here he was, facing me, and babbling of enterprises after a fashion only permitted to lunatics or drunkards. Yet my friend, as he sat there and smiled, was to all seeming sane, and was most certainly sober. It is not a glass or two of red wine that can upset a Wogan of Rath-coffy.

“Wogan himself, leaning back in his tilted chair, seemed to smile at my surprise.

“‘Ods-fish, man,’ he said. It was his fantastic habit at times to assert his devotion to the House

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of Stuart by helping himself to the favorite oath of his late sacred Majesty King Charles the Second. 'Ods-fish, man, one would think that you had never seen a sword drawn or a horse ridden that you stare so when a friend plans a pleasant little enterprise. It's nothing much out of the way for some Irish soldiers of fortune to cheat a pair of crowned rascals, and if it were the wildest game afoot, I am going to play it, and, with God's help, to win it.'

"I knew now that he was perfectly serious, and the gravity of his manner, drove graveness into me as a nail is driven in with a hammer. So I answered him as simply as if he had been proposing nothing more serious than a round of bowls or a game of basset.

"'Go on,' says I, quite simply, and Wogan went on and asked what he had come to ask, which was no more and no less than this—that I should grant leave of absence for a month, and no questions asked, to three gentlemen that were officers in my regiment. These three gentlemen were Major Richard Gaydon, Captain Luke O'Toole, and Captain John Misset. After what Wogan had told me, the request did not surprise me very much, and as to asking no questions, why, there was no need for me to be impertinently inquisitive. Sure I am as good as another at putting two and two together, and I guessed well enough the drift of Wogan's dare-devil intentions. So I gave my

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promise readily enough, while I sent up a silent prayer that my three blades might come back to me in safety. For they made a trey of amazing fine fellows, prides of a regiment, not to be willingly or lightly missed from a muster. And because they are now so famous—Roman Senators no less—I do not think it amiss to set down something here as to their qualities and their natures, for the benefit of future days, that will, as I hope and believe, always take an interest in the personalities of heroes. And if ever there were heroes in this world my friends Gaydon, O'Toole, and Misset were very surely of their fellowship.

“Major Gaydon was a shrewd, experienced soldier that had seen so much service as to deserve the appellation of veteran, though, indeed, he looked and carried himself as brisk as the best. He had a keen, hard-bitten face, was for the most part of taciturn disposition, but when he chose to speak could employ a dry and caustic humor of his own to considerable advantage. He was of the cautious rather than the reckless kind—these being the two main ways in which the measure of soldiers must be taken—and one that liked to know pretty clearly where he was going, and to be mighty sure of his footing on the way. But he was as brave as any man I ever knew, and for all that he was neither reckless nor dashing there was scarcely a man in the world that I would have sooner had by my side if I were in a tight place. He liked his glass,

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and he liked his pipe, but he liked both with temperance and moderation; and as for women, I know nothing about his whims or his ways concerning them. I do not think that he had ever married, and I never heard his name tied up in the tangle of a love-tale. He kept himself very much to himself, the good Gaydon, and never in his merriest moods was tempted to talk much about himself and his affairs. In the which reticence he differed very patently from Luke O'Toole. Indeed, I may say that at all points the two men might have been pitted one against the other as examples of the astonishing contrasts that the military life can produce. The popular idea of the soldier, and more especially the soldier of fortune, such as the Irish exile must needs be called who serves under a foreign flag when he would fain be serving under another—the popular idea of such an one, I say, is a roaring boy that rollicks his way from canteen to battlefield, is seldom sober, and forever kissing the wenches. If you drew Major Gaydon out of his uniform and stuck him into the clothes of a workaday civilian citizen you would probably take him for a shrewd fellow in business, one that meant what he said and did what he meant, and was to be reckoned with pretty seriously. There are many soldiers of Richard Gaydon's kidney, and it is well for the armies they serve that the thing is so. But the jolly devil-may-cares flourish too, and Luke O'Toole was one of the best and the merriest of them.

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“O’Toole was one of the finest men and one of the finest fellows that ever had served the Lilies. He measured nearly three inches more than six feet, but nature had shaped him all ways in such perfect proportion that he did not at the first glance convey the sense of his full height, and it was not until you saw him in immediate association with some comrade common tall that you realized the fact that O’Toole was more than common tall. It is a familiar saying—though it is not borne out by the nursery tales—that giants are generally good-natured. The saw was indeed a truth in O’Toole’s case, for I never met with any man of a more affable carriage, genial humor, and jolly bearing than he. He had an almost unbreakable belief in the courage of men and the simplicity of women. His large, honest face was ever aglow with good spirits, and if his curly red locks did not cover a head that would have served the turn of a statesman, at least it contrasted very pleasantly with the brightest and bravest blue eyes in the world.

“His failing, if I may say so, lay in this, that he was not overmodest about his qualities. He had a high opinion of his thick wits, at which some were inclined to laugh; of his thick arms, which made the would-be laughers wary; of his horsemanship; above all, of his swordsmanship. For all this, to know O’Toole was to love him. Indeed, Wogan was often pleased to bring him forward as an example of what Heaven had meant man to be

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before sophistication had undone him with pens and inks and its printed pages and its subtleties about the why of this and the wherefore of that, just a great, strong, healthy, honest man, not a savage lurking in caves and dashing in the skull of his fellow with a thigh-bone picked from his last meal, but a soldier, upright, gallant, loyal, credulous, swaggering, bragging, confident in his own honor and the honor of all human souls.

“O’Toole came of a line that boasted an astonishing antiquity. One of the house, not very early in its annals, had played an amazing part in the Trojan wars and was reported to have been called by Helen the handsomest man she had ever beheld, which must have been a rude jar for Paris, the son of Priam. Another had served under Alexander, and came nigh to meeting his death at the hands of a monarch jealous of his superior gifts, but, being warned in time by the beautiful Thais, who had conceived a passion for the blithe islander, made his escape and reigned for some time in India before returning to Erin. A third, it was asserted, sat for a season firmly enough on the contested throne of the late Cæsars. It certainly was not surprising that O’Toole should be proud of his lineage. Nor was it surprising that with the consciousness of such an ancestry—for the dear boy believed every word of the blessed rigmarole—he should conceive it his duty not merely to live up to, but if it might be to surpass,

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the character and the deeds of his amazing forebears. Thus there never was adventure so extravagant but that Luke O'Toole would undertake it cheerfully, serenely confident that if he undertook it it must needs be carried to a magnificently triumphant conclusion. Nor was he ever undeceived or dispirited by the occasional failures, whether in arms, or in love, or at play, which fell to his lot, as they must fall to the lot even of an Irish gentleman and soldier. When it pleased fortune to deal him one of these rebuffs he accepted it with an honest astonishment, had the native sense to say no more about it, and, as I verily believe, very soon forgot that any such cross had been marked upon his course of glory. Bless his heart! he was a wonderfully good fellow.

"Misset was a very different man from his two comrades. For Misset was a student; Misset was a scholar, or, at least, so he looked to those of us who had no great tincture of letters. He seemed to me as if he had drifted by some strange chance from the cool quadrangles and gray cloisters of some ancient and honorable university into the bustle and clatter and rattle of barrack and bivouac. Not that he lacked anything of the many arts that a soldier must needs know. He could handle his sword as well as any man in Dillon's command, and as for the pistol, he was the surest shot I have ever known, my uncle Cornelius not excepted, who was the terror of Galway in his time. But what he

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took most pleasure in was the reading of love-verses, and next to that the writing of love-verses; and, indeed, he accomplished this often very well, and had a pretty skill in the turning of a brace of rhymes. Nature had made him for a lover, a man to love and be loved by many ladies, and he would probably have wooed and won and loved and ridden away time after time if he had not chanced to woo and to win the woman who was now Mistress Misset.

“That ended the shifting game for him. He remained a lover just the same, but his love was all for one woman, and that woman was his wife. I know that it amazed some of us who knew his inflammable fancy to find that he proved such a pink of husbands. But, indeed, the world at its best of times has not many women so sweet and good and fair as Mistress Misset, and the man would have been but a poor rogue who, being so graced as to share her life, could think of any woman’s lips or eyes thereafter. All the elements of love in him that had darted hither and thither in little tongues of fire now burned in one clear, steady flame on the altar of his affection for her. And, indeed, if he was happy in so rare a wife, she in her turn was happy in so rare a lover. He was not a man that was always tied to his wife’s petticoat tail, and soldiers did not lose a good comrade because Mistress Misset had found a good husband. But he was best pleased with his life when it was passed

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in her company, and when he was away from her I guessed that she was always in his thoughts.

"I knew very well, considering Misset, that the risk to be run by himself would not of old time have weighed one jot with him. But now he was married and much in love with his wife, and love and marriage must make a difference even to the bravest, which is why I hold that it is well for a soldier to be celibate. When a soldier is married his life is no longer wholly his own to throw away for an orange if it please him. There is always the exquisite she to be considered, and though I knew that Misset would charge a battery at command with unaltered courage and composure, here was Wogan wanting to implicate him in an adventure which, after all, was none of his ordered business, but something quite over and above what duty and what honor demanded of him. And not only was Wogan desiring him to hazard his life upon what might very well have looked like a fool's errand, but he was practically going to ask him to risk the life of the thing that was dearest to him in all the world, the woman he loved, the woman who loved him, the wife of his heart. I thought of all this swiftly, and for the moment I could not be sure whether I should be more vexed if Misset did refuse, as he might very well refuse, or if he consented and put one of the sweetest faces in Europe in jeopardy.

"Mistress Misset had her lodgings over an apoth-

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ecary's shop in one of the pleasantest streets in our garrison town, and, indeed, her habitation was as pleasant as the street. Her windows, which were on the first floor, looked out upon the trees that lined both sides of the way, and at this season of the year they were very green and leafy and very busy and brisk with the coming and going of innumerable birds. From the apothecary's below there always ascended a faint and grateful perfume of the sweet waters, essences, scents, and unguents he compounded, and for which Mistress Misset was one of his best, as she was the nearest, of his patrons. There were always flowers in her apartments, making them gay with their color and odor, and, indeed, the whole place seemed to wear that air of home and of a settled habitation which is as pleasing as it is strange to the soldier.

"I was always glad to spend an evening there when my leisure permitted it, and, indeed, I believe I was always welcome, for Misset and I were as good friends as if we had been brothers, and Mrs. Misset loved any man that loved her lord. It was very good and very restful to sit in that quiet room of a summer evening, Misset and I by the open windows smoking our pipes as gentlemen should—for the dear woman would have her husband smoke at home that he might not sigh to smoke abroad—and she at her spinet. Her hands were very white, for she had an exceeding care of her person, and the apothecary belowstairs vended

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an excellent compost of almonds, and it was a pleasure to see them rise and flutter and fall over the jacks while her smooth, young voice, low and fresh and tuneful, breathed some tender ballad that told of the home we should know no more and of the peace that was not for us. Oh no, I was not in love with Mistress Misset, save in that honorable way in which an honest man must love all good women; but if I had chanced to meet her before she clapped eyes on Misset I have very little doubt that I should have made an exemplary fool of myself. Yet I dare swear that I should have made a good husband, too, if only some woman like Mistress Misset had been wise enough and kind enough to perceive it, albeit I had not the command of the graces like Misset, and could not write a pair of rhymes if the alternative were the gallows.

“Mistress Misset had a cousin, Jane Gordon by name, that lived with her to keep her company while her husband was away. This girl was a very comely wench, with fair hair and blue eyes and the most strange, still-set, mask-like face that ever I beheld upon so young a woman. Not that she was at all of an unchangeable or unwomanly temper. She could laugh and she could cry—I have seen her do both many a time—and she could be cheerful or sullen—and I had tasted of her quality in both fits often enough—but for the most part her face was cast in a gravity that did but heighten her charms. Folk disputed over her, some going so far as to

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say that she was beautiful, while others would have it that she was not even ordinarily good-looking; and sometimes we would debate this point before her for sport or banter, and then, though she was not in the least put out at our play, she would blush the rosiest red that I ever saw, until her face and neck were as pink as a poppy.

“But as for Luke O’Toole, he always complimented her upon her comeliness boisterously, with florid, uncouth compliments. They were good enough friends, those two, when they met, and the girl was always ready, after some bout of his awkward eloquence, to banter him back with some jest about the bigness of his body and the smallness of his wit. But I thought then, and indeed think now, that Charles Wogan was the king of men for her at that time.

“If I have permitted myself to speak with so much freedom of these dear women, it is because, for all that they were private ladies, very domestic and unsolicitous of the world’s eye, it came about, as every one knows, that they had to take their share—and that a large one—in this business of Wogan’s. The world is familiar with their names and their daring; they proved as good lieutenants to my friend in his enterprise as any of the stalwart gentlemen that held their swords and their lives at his service. After all, it is no great marvel for one soldier to do another soldier a good turn in a cause that is his King’s cause. But when you find ten-

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der, delicately nurtured women give themselves to the adventure with such zeal, why, I think you have some cause for astonishment and applause.

“The upshot of the matter was, of course, that I did as Charles Wogan wished. I wrote out three separate letters granting leave of absence for a month to Major Richard Gaydon, Captain Luke O’Toole, and Captain John Misset—and I did this with cheerfulness and alacrity, although I was well aware that at headquarters there was a very great unwillingness to grant leave to Irish officers in the service of France during those troublous times. I gave the letters into Wogan’s charge, and he pocketed them joyously. He had his reasons, he explained, for not visiting his friends there and then, for all he was in the same town with them. His doing so might arouse suspicion, he declared; he had his plans to mature; he would make a rendezvous in his own good time and at his own good place. And so with many thanks and hand-grasps, that more than repaid me for any pricks of conscience as to the informality of my compliance, the dear gentleman took his leave of me. I wished him good luck and God-speed. ‘He was going,’ I said; and the good fellow was pleased to laugh at my little witticism; ‘he was going to make a hole in the moon.’”

(Thus far Colonel O’Carroll in his memoirs, but no farther. If he wrote more on Wogan and his companions,

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that staggering quadrilateral, what he wrote has perished, to our regret. Very possibly he wrote no more, being unfamiliar with the pen. His omission can be and has been supplied by many precious papers familiar to students of history. One source—shall we say of information—has been either accidentally or deliberately overlooked. There exists in the archives of the Abbey of Bonne Aventure in Poitou, in that section which owes its existence to the bequest of the illustrious and learned Dom Gregory, and which is adding yearly to its riches, a manuscript which professes to set forth the true story of the adventure of Clementina and her rescuer, Charles Wogan. The fact that it differs in many important particulars from the accepted versions of the episode should only render it the more interesting to the curious and the more undeserving of neglect. It may be, as Von Hammerkopf insists, no more than a forgery and a fiction, but if only for the sake of its rarity, its authority has been scrupulously accepted in the narrative which here follows.)

II

THE "BLUE MOON"

THE inn of the "Blue Moon" at Strasbourgh stood in a by-street in a quiet part of the town. It did not count among the most fashionable hostelries of the place, but it had a following of its own and throve. Those that knew it, liked it, and passed often through its unpretentious archway into the old-fashioned courtyard with its encircling gallery. If the exterior of the "Blue Moon" was modest and retiring, if its interior was old-fashioned and unassuming, it commanded a well-stocked cellar and boasted an inherited tradition of excellent cookery. Such of the better class of travellers as came to it, driven it may be by failure to find accommodation within the walls of its more garish and ostentatious rivals, never had cause to regret their unexpected lodgings. But the "Blue Moon" lived principally upon humbler patronage than the favor of the great and the well-to-do. It had its own little school of clients in the town, and a steady flow of commercial visitors from all parts of Europe who would not have been welcomed at the lordlier inns where the great gentlefolk put up, but who

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were cordially greeted at the "Blue Moon," and made very comfortable and snug at moderate charges.

On a certain day of early spring in the year 1719 the landlord of the "Blue Moon" was busy in his common-room putting things to rights. An ordinary observer would have thought that everything was pretty right as it stood, but the landlord, that was an old soldier and passionately orderly, was not easily to be contented. His pewter glowed with a nobler sheen than silver; his silver—for he had some store of that, too—glittered brightly enough to make a spectator wink; his glass was as clear as a stream, and his napery was as white as swan's-down. The landlord was free to amuse himself in his taste for tidiness, for he had no company that morning to disturb him. There was an apparent reason for his loneliness, for the weather was raw and inclement for travelling; but there was another reason, known to the landlord, which permitted him to feel no regret at the absence of custom. This was the fact that the majority of his rooms had been engaged for that day by a patron whom the landlord, in his quality of old soldier, was always eager to please.

So he flitted from one part of the room to another, altering the poise of a pewer charger or beaker here, shifting a silver bowl or goblet there, or enumerating with infinite satisfaction the piles of linen stored in the oaken cupboard. Because of

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the sharpness of the weather a brisk fire burned on the hearth, in front of which the huge, high-backed settle was drawn at a comfortable angle. The landlord paused in his labors to survey the engaging scene and to wish that he had some one with him to share his admiration. Curiously enough, the wish was scarcely formed before it was gratified.

There was a pounding of hoofs and a grinding of wheels in the courtyard, and the landlord hurried with all speed to the portal to welcome the arrivals. These proved to be a gentleman accompanied by two ladies, who were descending from their carriage as the landlord appeared. The gentleman was tall and dark, with a handsome, alert face, whose manliness was in no ways marred by a certain pensive expression that became him. He wore the uniform of Dillon's regiment, a uniform that promptly brought the landlord's hand to his head in salutation. The two ladies who accompanied the soldier were both young and both extremely comely. She that seemed to be slightly the elder of the pair clung to her male companion's arm with an air of tender dependence that was pleasing to behold, but the other moved with a carriage of independence that betokened a high spirit.

The new-comers were promptly ushered into the common-room by the landlord. There the ladies seated themselves, the one with an air of languor that showed how she welcomed the prospect of repose; the other with a manner that seemed to sug-

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gest that if she sat down at all, it was rather to please her friends than from any personal sense of fatigue. The military gentleman immediately interrogated the landlord.

"Have you," he asked, "a room where these ladies can rest after the fatigue of their journey?"

The landlord was amiably certain that he could oblige so far. The languid lady yawned prettily, lifting a dainty hand to a dainty mouth, and protested that she was very tired.

"Small wonder," the other girl commented, "jogging about the world at this hour of the morning."

She rose as she spoke, and, placing herself in front of a mirror, surveyed her reflection disapprovingly for a few silent seconds. Then she spoke again, fretfully:

"I vow," she protested, "that I shall look a fright for the rest of the day."

The soldier gallantly assured her that she was mistaken, and as the languid lady had now risen to her feet, and a maid-servant had appeared to guide the ladies to their room, the young lady consented to abandon the attractions of the mirror, and, after giving the support of her encircling arm to the other woman, to follow the maid from the room.

When the ladies had gone the soldier seated himself on the settle, stretched his legs to the fire, and again addressed the landlord.

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"Bring me a flask of Hermitage," he ordered, and then added, as if remembering: "The Green Seal."

The landlord smiled appreciation. "Your honor calls for good wine," he said, slyly.

The stranger smiled in his turn, and his smile was as pleasant as his speech. "I am glad to hear it," he said.

The landlord left the room to execute his guest's command, and as soon as he had gone the guest drew a letter from his pocket addressed to Captain Misset, of Dillon's regiment, and read it over softly to himself. "Be at the 'Blue Moon' Inn at Strasbourgh," he murmured, "at noon on Monday. Bring Mistress Misset and Jane with you. Order a bottle of Hermitage—the Green Seal—and you will get good drinking.—C. W."

Misset repeated the signatory initials and interpreted them: "Charles Wogan." He folded up the letter again and returned it to his pocket. Then he leaned forward, whistling softly to himself and extending his fine, white hands to the cheerful blaze. Presently the landlord came into the room bearing an ancient-looking flask, which he dusted and drew with an air of reverent care.

As he slowly filled a glass with the crimson fluid he spoke. "There is only one man in the world," he said, "that can have told you to ask for this wine."

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Misset looked up at him. "Indeed!" he said. "Who is the one man?"

The landlord looked wise. "If your honor would be discreet, I am discretion," he said, quietly.

As Misset showed no sign of desiring to continue the conversation, the landlord turned aside and busied himself with his interrupted task of trifling with his silver and his pewter.

Misset lifted his glass to his lips with a look of curious expectation, sipped with the due caution of a connoisseur, smiled a lively appreciation, and swiftly drained the glass. Then he filled another, and, lolling comfortably in a corner of the settle, enjoyed the blended pleasures of the warm fire without, while he indulged in such reflections as come to the wise when they taste good liquor.

Presently, however, his quiet was invaded by a fresh claimant upon the hospitality of the "Blue Moon." The new-comer, oddly enough, was habited like his predecessor in the uniform of Dillon's regiment. Misset, comfortably ensconced in his corner, could not see the new arrival without moving, and having no desire to move, and little curiosity, remained as he was. Had he moved he would have seen a man of middle age, erect, authoritative, and precise. The new arrival did not see his predecessor, but called to the landlord, who promptly saluted.

The new-comer gave his order: "Serve me a flask of Hermitage—Green Seal," he said, per-

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emptorily, and the nature of the words and the sound of the voice that uttered them roused the drowsing attention of Misset. He rose to his feet and skipped from the shelter of the settle, crying:

"The devil! the devil! Gaydon, by the Holy!"

Gaydon turned to face his appellant, and, instantly recognizing him, shouted his name in astonishment. "Misset! Himself, no less!"

Misset answered, wringing his friend's hand: "What in the world brings you here to the 'Blue Moon' and makes you thirst to drink Green Seal Hermitage?"

Gaydon looked at Misset with a shrewd smile. "Sure the cleverest devil that ever was fathered in County Kildare," he answered. "Let me read you a letter." As he spoke he took a letter from his pocket that was in its tenor and scripture well-nigh the very fellow of the letter at that moment in Misset's possession, and read it out to him: "'Be at the 'Blue Moon' Inn at Strasbourgh at noon on Monday week—'"

Misset interrupted him, continuing on the lines of his own letter: "'Bring Mistress Misset and Jane with you,'" he quoted.

Gaydon stared at him. "I beg your pardon," he said, astonished.

Misset realized his mistake. "No," he corrected, hastily. "Of course you would not have that. I mean, 'Order a bottle of Hermitage, the Green Seal,'"

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“Order a bottle of Hermitage, the Green Seal,” Gaydon echoed; then continuing, he added, “and you will get good drinking.” Suddenly it seemed to occur to him that there was matter for surprise in Misset’s intimate knowledge of his missive. “How on earth,” he asked, bluntly, “do you know what was written in my letter, anyway?”

Misset, in justification and with a quiet smile, produced his own letter. “Because,” he said, “I have also had a letter advising me to visit the ‘Blue Moon’ at Strasbourgh, and while there to drink Green Seal Hermitage.”

“The deuce you have?” Gaydon commented. “And how is your letter signed?”

“It is signed ‘C.W.,’” Misset answered, pointing to the signature as he spoke, and Gaydon echoed him, “‘C.W.,’” and whistled thoughtfully. “Charles Wogan, no less,” Misset explained, though it was clear from Gaydon’s face that no explanation was necessary.

“What does he want with us?” Gaydon asked, vaguely.

Misset shook his head. “God knows!” he answered, with equal vagueness.

“Well, God bless him whatever he wants,” Gaydon said, fervently. “There isn’t a man in the world I’d sooner serve than Charles Wogan, barring the King, of course, God bless him!”

“Small blame to you for saying that same, Major,” Misset agreed. “There never was a better

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boy came out of Ireland than Charles Wogan of Rathcoffy."

"No, nor never will," Gaydon affirmed, emphatically. As he spoke the landlord returned from the cellar bearing the bottle of Hermitage that Gaydon had ordered, and, setting it on the table by the side of Misset's flagon, slowly poured out a bumper and retired. When he had gone Gaydon resumed his theme. "I'd like," he continued, "to know what Wogan wants us to do."

"He wants us to drink Green Seal Hermitage," Misset answered, lifting his full glass to his lips and emptying it. "And he couldn't set us a much pleasanter task," he concluded, as he set the glass on the table again.

Gaydon, following his friend's example, lifted and emptied his glass, and when he lowered it his face was eloquent of approval. "That's truth for you," he said, enthusiastically. "I always think these Rhone wines have a perfume, a body, a tang that beat creation." He paused for a moment, and then continued, as if a thought had suddenly struck him: "What was it," he questioned, "that you were saying about Mistress Misset and Jane?"

Misset ensconced himself comfortably in his angle of the settle with his glass and flask, and waited until Gaydon had occupied the opposite corner with his glass and his flask before he answered the question. Then he spoke. "I was

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saying," he said, "that our dear Wogan asked me to bring the girls with me."

Gaydon looked frank amazement. "And did you?" he asked, in a voice that betrayed his surprise.

Misset nodded. "I did that same," he responded, briefly.

Gaydon sprang to his feet in an instant, all eagerness. "Where are the darlings?" he asked. "Let me pay my respects."

Misset signalled to his friend to resume his seat, and Gaydon somewhat reluctantly obeyed. "They are resting after the journey," Misset explained. "You shall see them presently."

Gaydon looked pleased at the prospect. "God bless them!" he said, warmly. "I drink their dear healths."

The pair drank again. Misset eyed his empty glass approvingly. "A fine wine," he murmured; "a bright wine; a kind wine."

There was a sound of footsteps outside; then the door opened again, and for the third time that morning a man who wore the uniform of Dillon's regiment entered the common-room of the "Blue Moon." This latest comer was a bigger and a younger man than either of the others, his predecessors; and he had a fine, big voice that suited the fine bigness of his figure, and when he called for the landlord's attention he did so in a tone of pleasant thunder. "Landlord!" he cried, and at the sound of that rich and rolling voice the landlord

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swiftly turned and stared at the huge stranger admiringly as he saluted. The voice had also its effect upon Misset and Gaydon, snugly concealed behind the high screen of their settle. They lowered their lifted glasses and pricked their ears to listen.

"Your servant," the landlord said, and waited for the order which he guessed was coming.

The big man began his order. "Fetch me a flagon of—" he said, and then seemed to have forgotten what he wanted, for he paused and murmured to himself, "Now what the mischief is it you've got to fetch?" With a comic air of bewilderment he drew a letter from his pocket and fumbled at it anxiously.

By this time Misset and Gaydon had risen cautiously to their feet and were peeping with grinning, delighted faces round the edge of the settle.

The big man scratched his ear. "What is it at all?" he muttered.

"Is it," the landlord suggested, quietly, "a bottle of the Green Seal Hermitage?"

"It is that same," the genial giant agreed, banging his big hands together in a sounding clap. "But whatever made you guess it?"

"There's a great run on the Green Seal Hermitage to-day," the landlord explained. "These gentlemen share your taste." And as he spoke he pointed to Gaydon and Misset, who had now emerged from the shelter of the settle and stood silently smiling in front of it.

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The new-comer turned toward them, recognized them, and bellowed their names joyously. "Gaydon! Misset!" he cried, extending mighty hands in greeting, and his predecessors, clasping each a hand, chorused the new-comer's name, "O'Toole," in a joyful welcome.

"What kind wind blows us together?" O'Toole asked, gladly, gripping his comrades' fingers in a tremendous squeeze that made them tingle.

"I'll wager that you've had a letter," Misset said, confidently.

And O'Toole, producing the letter, confirmed his confidence. "I have," he said.

"And it's signed 'C. W.,'" Gaydon suggested.

"It is," O'Toole admitted.

"And C. W. stands for Charles Wogan, I'm thinking," Misset commented.

"Be damned if it doesn't," O'Toole agreed, cheerfully. "But what does it all mean?"

"It means," Misset explained, "that Wogan wants us."

"What for?" O'Toole questioned, with the puzzled look on his face that it always wore when anything unusual was toward.

"That you must ask Wogan himself," Gaydon answered.

"Where is Wogan, to ask him?" O'Toole queried.

And Misset queried with him, "Yes, where is Wogan?"

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Gaydon shook his head. "There's the rub," he said.

"He can't be far off, that's certain," O'Toole insisted. "If he's at the pains to ask three friends to take wine with him, he's never the man to play us false."

Gaydon looked narrowly about the room, as if he expected to find the man he sought in some odd corner. Then he began to cry, in a loud voice, "Wogan darling, where are you?"

Misset, fired by the idea, swelled the cry. "Wogan! Wogan!" he shouted as lustily as his friend.

"Give him a rouse all together," O'Toole suggested. "If he's within earshot that will fetch him."

Moved by a common impulse, the three men raised their voices, shouting lustily, "Wogan! Wogan! Wogan!"

III

THE OPENING OF A DOOR

AS if their clamor had served the purpose of a successful incantation, the door of the room opened and the man they were calling for, the man they were looking for, entered the room and greeted his friends with a quiet, "God save all here!"

The Chevalier Charles Wogan was a young man of little more than middle height, but of so erect a carriage that he was commonly counted tall. The slightness of his frame and the fineness of his limbs, while they curiously dissimulated his great physical strength, so increased the youthfulness of his presence as to make him appear almost boyish. His handsome, well-featured face was stamped with an air of great courage and cheerfulness, that seemed to challenge all he met to be at their best in his company. Master of many weapons, master of many languages, Wogan, in the zenith of his splendid spring, was one of the most accomplished gentlemen in Europe, and had proved himself an intrepid soldier and an able diplomat before he had crossed the threshold of his prime. The nephew of Richard Talbot, whom King James the Second

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had made Duke of Tyrconnel in the days of his brief dominion in Ireland, Charles Wogan had been familiar with courts and camps from his boyhood. Yet he had contrived, in his intimacy with great princes and great captains, to admire only their nobler parts, and to copy only their honorable qualities. A native fastidiousness in the man kept him clean without twisting him into a precisian; he took his pleasures like other soldiers, but he took them with a sweet temperance that selected and was sane. He was the merriest companion in the world, and most liberal in his tolerance of other men's actions and opinions, so long as those actions and opinions were unstained by cowardice or dishonor. But he had his own high standard of conduct, and he followed it as faithfully as he could, serenely confident in his power to reprove, and if necessary to chasten very effectually any that might be tempted to presume upon his way of behavior.

Although Charles Wogan was a soldier, he was not wearing a soldier's coat this day. His lithe figure was habited soberly as to hue, though richly as to mode, in a dark-colored travelling suit which, if it modified his military bearing to something of a civilian ease, made him appear indeed a civilian of great distinction.

The three men gave his name in a breath of exultation. "Wogan!" they shouted.

And Wogan smiled at their enthusiasm. "Himself, and never better," he said, cheerfully, as he

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exchanged hand-grasps with his comrades. "It's delighted I am to see you boys, though I made sure you would come if it was at all possible. How are ye all?"

O'Toole answered for himself and his friends. "Well enough, thanking you kindly."

Wogan turned to Misset. "I hope," he said, "Mistress Misset is well and with you."

"She is both," Misset answered. "Also Jane."

Wogan rubbed his hands. "Wicked little Jane," he said. "That's good." He looked meaningly at O'Toole as he spoke, and that warrior, who had manifested much delighted surprise at Misset's mention of his companions, turned a poppy red under his friend's gaze, and sought to cover his confusion by coughing loudly. Wogan smiled compassionately at his big comrade's visible embarrassment.

"Well, my hearts," he declared, "I am glad to find you so blithe and lively."

"You seem cheery enough," Gaydon answered. "How do you manage to be always gay? It's a hard, harsh, cold, cross, uncomfortable sort of a world, but whenever I see you you are as brisk as a blackbird on a thorn."

Wogan seated himself comfortably on the table, took a glass of Hermitage that Gaydon offered him, emptied it, and spoke: "Friends of my youth, I've got a secret to tell you. When I lay a prisoner in Newgate in the Fifteen, with the gallows for my

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finish, I had time and plenty for thinking, and I remember as well as yesterday the thoughts that came cluttering about my mind as I lay in that great, damp, damnable English prison. I said to myself, 'Charles Wogan, my boy, Charles Wogan of Rathcoffy, you're caught in a trap, and the end of it seems mighty like dancing on nothing at all worth speaking of. But if the saints and the angels and the other beneficent beings, that are rightly supposed to look after the lives of poor Irishmen, should have a twist of a thought for me and get me out sound of this mischief, why, then,' says I, 'I make a vow never to show trouble for anything in life again, but to take all smiling.' Well, boys, you know that I did escape, glory be to God! in a way that was little short of a miracle, and I have tried to keep to my vow ever since."

"Faith," O'Toole said, with a grin, "that's as good a philosophy as another, if only a man can live up to it."

Wogan laughed gayly. "It's easy enough when you give your mind to it," he assented.

There was a pause, and then Gaydon tapped Wogan on the knee. "Wogan, little chicken," he said, "I'm thinking a great thought."

"Give it birth, boy," Wogan answered.

"I'm thinking," Gaydon went on, "you didn't call us three old friends here, to this blessed 'Blue Moon,' to entertain us with your theories as to the philosophy of life."

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"You are right," Wogan answered, calmly. "I did not."

His calmness had an irritating effect upon Gaydon. "Well, what's in the wind now?" he asked, impatiently.

The air of mystification which enveloped the day's proceedings, an air which only amused Misset and half pleased and half puzzled O'Toole, made the graver Gaydon restless.

Wogan took his little show of fretfulness with perfect good humor. "All in good time," he said with a smile. "I come on a strange errand and a dangerous, and maybe I want you to share the danger."

"What is it all, in Heaven's name?" O'Toole implored, bubbling with excitement.

"Is there anything you could want of us," Misset questioned, with a faint note of indignation in his voice, "that we would not give you?"

Wogan looked at his three friends lovingly. "Dear comrades and brothers-in-arms," he began, "if I come to you in this business it is because I am in need of the best help I can get, and because I know of no better men than you. But I tell you at once, before I cut to the core of the matter, that it is the deadliest business you or I ever set about."

"So much the better," Gaydon said, and Misset and O'Toole echoed him lustily.

Wogan looked satisfied. "I felt sure I could trust you," he said. "Yet I must needs warn you

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a little more. If we come out of this business in which I ask your help with success, we are better by the honor and the glory, but by mighty little else."

"What in all the world is better than honor and glory?" O'Toole asked, with a great wave of his hand.

Misset clapped him on the shoulder. "Good man!" he said, half earnest, in agreement with the sentiment; half mocking, at the histrionic manner of its delivery.

"Wait!" Wogan said. "If we fail, as it is ten to one we do, our heads will pay for it. I tell you this in all fairness by way of preface, for once I begin to tell my story you will find no way to withdraw."

"Faith," Gaydon said, gruffly, "my head is no such wonderful ornament that I should set much store by it, and I'll not think so ill of you, Charles, as to believe that you mean to affront me by hinting that danger could sour an adventure for me."

Misset banged the table applaudingly. "Hear him! hear him!" he cried.

"Them's my sentiments," O'Toole shouted, stormily.

Wogan raised a deprecating hand and gained silence. "Forgive me," he said, gently, "the punctilio, the clearing of the ground. From this moment we are together, lads, till the end. If I summoned you to meet me in this whimsical fash-

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ion, and this unfamiliar place, you may be sure that I had very good reason for doing so. Now, in the first place, you must know that I am no less than an envoy, and the envoy of a king."

He paused to watch the effect of his words upon his hearers. O'Toole gaped. Misset smiled.

Gaydon leaned forward. "Meaning our King?" he questioned.

"Our King," Wogan repeated. He sprang from the table to his feet as he spoke, and the four men in homage to their exiled monarch made a military salute. Wogan's three friends, led by O'Toole, cried lustily. "God save the King!" And Wogan echoed them with a "God save the King!" as loud and valiant. When the little ebullition of loyalty ended Wogan resumed his seat on the table and continued his discourse. "And my purpose is to capture a queen."

The three men stared at him in astonishment.

"To capture a queen?" Gaydon repeated, making himself the voice of the triple amazement.

Wogan corrected his phrase. "I should rather say to rescue a queen," he explained. "I want to secure a queen for my King."

The words were strange enough, startling enough. Misset heard them in alert silence. O'Toole glared at Wogan. "What do you mean?" he gasped.

"Wogan, my boy, you have something to say, and you'd better say it without any interruption from us," Gaydon observed, wisely. He dragged a chair

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forward as he spoke and seated himself by the table. Misset and O'Toole followed his example, and Wogan continued his tale.

"You know as well as I do," he began, "that his Majesty King James the Third, whom Heaven bless and preserve, must find him a wife among the royal princesses of Europe that the Stuart blood may run in ceaseless succession."

O'Toole nodded approval. "Certainly," he said, and looked profoundly wise.

"The difficulty is to find the lady," Gaydon commented.

O'Toole would not agree. "Sure, no difficulty at all," he protested. "Where is the she that would not be glad to marry the King of England?"

"Temporarily residing in Rome," Misset remarked dryly.

Wogan raised a hand in demand for silence. "Hush!" he said. "Of course you will very well understand that the business was not as easy as A B C. His Majesty, God bless him, is unhappily at this moment no more than a monarch *in partibus infidelium*. He will come to his own again in good time."

"Amen," O'Toole said, gravely.

"No man doubts that," Gaydon asserted.

Misset looked grave and whistled thoughtfully.

"But it may take time," Wogan continued, "a year or two, or perhaps three, and in the mean time our royal master is not necessarily a *persona grata*

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at a foreign court when he comes a-wooing. So, you see, the wooing had to be conducted warily. It would not do to ask and not to have; and it would not do to let the Elector guess that we were going to ask at all, knowing that the usurper would do his best to interfere with any alliance his Majesty might desire. The matter would have to be entrusted to an envoy, to a secret envoy, to a reliable and discreet man. His Majesty was pleased to think that I was reliable, trustworthy, and discreet."

"His Majesty was quite right," O'Toole interpolated, enthusiastically.

"His Majesty is always right," Wogan said, dryly, though it was plain that he was none too displeased at his friend's fervor. "His Majesty, after due consultation with his chief adviser, Cardinal Gualterio, vested me with full power and procuration, and so in the beginning of last year I set out on what professed to be a pleasant round of visits to several of the courts of the Empire. But, albeit I lingered here and dallied there, for all the world like a vagrant butterfly of a fellow with no other thought in heart or head than his own entertainment, I was always intent upon my errand. I will not vex your ears, old friends, with an account of all that befell me in my roundabout wanderings, though, indeed, I enjoyed myself well enough, and would have enjoyed myself much more but for the thought of my aim and my embassy. Let it be sufficient that in the fulness of time I came to

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the little court of Ohlau, in Silesia, where Prince James Sobieski reigned his reign. I came there, as I flatter myself, in the most natural, easy, inconspicuous way in the world, unnoticed by any one, certainly unsuspected by any one. And it was there I came to the conclusion that of all the sweet royal ladies of Europe there is no lady better fitted to be the consort of a great king than the lady who is Princess Clementina Sobieski, the youngest daughter of the Prince of Poland."

"If you say so, my boy," O'Toole interrupted, "I have every reason to respect your taste in the matter of women."

"She is a goddess, of course," Gaydon observed, confidently.

Wogan smiled at him. "No woman is a goddess, my good Gaydon. No woman ever has been a goddess, no woman ever will be a goddess. It is only some addle-pated poet who talks and thinks in that way of women at all. They are flesh and blood like the rest of us, crammed to the lips with faults, the best of them, and yet the best of them are wonders, and bless the world. As for the Princess Clementina, in sober truth, I scarcely saw the young lady at all, and had scarcely five minutes' speech with her. But I found her fair, and I heard of her virtues, and I knew of her kinship, and I decided to act. Behold the portrait of the lady who, God willing, shall be our King's wife and England's queen!"

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As he spoke he drew a small miniature in a gold case from his bosom and placed it on the table. Misset seized it, and the picture passed rapidly from hand to hand of the admiring men.

"If she is as beautiful as that," Gaydon said, rapturously, "she is beautiful enough for any king that ever wore crown."

"She sets my pulses drumming," Misset vowed.

O'Toole declared, "I long to draw sword for so sweet a lady."

Gaydon punctuated the raptures. "But you haven't finished your story," he said.

Wogan went on: "Well, to make a long story short, I told the girl's father my errand, and the Polack jumped at the meaning and was as brisk as a bird in spring for the marriage, so that, indeed, my mission seemed ended before it was well begun. But then came in that devil of a chance that mars the merriest enterprises. Up to the point where all important pledges were given everything had passed in the most perfect secrecy, a secrecy so black and impenetrable, as I thought, that in my foolhardiness I made sure that I had no more to do than to hasten back to my royal master and assure him that all was well. But, unfortunately, the game of life is not played in that fashion, friend Gaydon, and just at the moment when everything seemed at the best, all turned to the worst. There I was; I had the consent of father and mother, the approval of the princess, and, best of all, for

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the state business, the contract of marriage duly and formally signed by both parties."

Gaydon looked surprised. "It seems to me," he said, for Wogan came to a halt and seemed to be lost in his recollections, "that the game was played, and that you were of the winning side."

"So it seemed, man, so it seemed," he answered. "But I counted without the devil and the Elector of Hanover. For while I, flushed with success, was posting back to Italy to tell the tale of my triumph, it seems that his serene rascality the Elector began to grow suspicious. Thus, while I was at Urbino congratulating my royal master on his choice of a bride, the emissaries of the Hanoverian were snuffing out the whole business. It was no fault of mine; it was the fault of the Sobieskis. You know what royal people are."

"I know little of princes," Gaydon admitted, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I'll take them at your valuation."

Wogan went on: "Why, they lingered and dawdled, wasting precious time in unnecessary preparations for the young lady's journey. Not that she was in any way to blame for the blunder. She would have swung herself a-horseback and galloped off to my royal master as merrily as you please. But that was not the way with her parents. All must be done in accordance with etiquette, with precedence, with the dignity of the high contracting parties. So the usurper's lackeys,

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spies, eavesdroppers, and backdoor rascals find out what game's afoot."

"Oh, murder, murder!" O'Toole groaned, shaking his head dismally.

He would have said more, but Wogan overrode his interruption. "Back goes the news to London," he went on, "and sets the little Elector in a rage. My fair princess had started on her belated journey to my royal master. Any gentleman would have let her go her way in peace—"

Misset interrupted cynically. "But you are speaking of the Elector of Hanover," he suggested.

"True," Wogan agreed, "yet a man might steal a crown and yet not be base enough to interfere with the love affairs of a lady."

"What does the little Elector do?" Gaydon asked.

Wogan continued: "The petty fellow set his wits to work to prevent my little princess from marrying my royal master. So he brings pressure upon the Emperor of Austria, who, for political reasons, is anxious to please him. Can you believe it, boys, this emperor, this successor of Charlemagne, was mean enough to give orders that the princess should be arrested on her arrival at Innsbruck and kept under lock and key until further orders from the British Whigs."

O'Toole banged the table with his big fist. "Emperor or no emperor, it was a dastard's act," he shouted.

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"The worst of it is," Gaydon said, gravely, "that it seems to me to end the business."

Wogan turned on him sharply. "End the business!" he echoed. "By God! man, the business is not well begun! Emperor or no emperor, he shall not keep our Queen from our King. Emperor or no emperor, he shall not insult King James with impunity. He shall find that our royal master has friends who can checkmate him, who can checkmate the Elector of Hanover, and bring the bride to the groom in spite of their teeth."

"Who are these friends?" Gaydon asked dryly, "who are going to do all these wonderful things?"

"Four men," Wogan answered, simply.

"Four men!" Misset echoed, astonished.

"Whose names are?" O'Toole questioned.

Wogan answered him genially. "The name of one is Charles Wogan of Rathcoffy. The name of another is Richard Gaydon, Knight of the Order of St. Louis, and Major in the Irish regiment of Dillon in France. The name of a third is John Misset, and the name of the fourth is Luke O'Toole."

IV

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O'TOOLE put down the glass he was lifting to his lips and stared at the speaker with an honest amazement painted on his handsome face. "Holy Moses!" he murmured, and then feeling that he had given sufficient expression to his feelings, he raised the cup again and emptied it.

Gaydon leaned forward and looked shrewdly into Wogan's face. "Is it funning you are?" he asked.

But before he could be answered Misset interposed with a question of his own. "Excellent friend," he said, with a voice whose inquiry was faintly tinged with mockery, "what can you and I and our friends here do against the Emperor of Austria?"

Wogan's calm gaze travelled quietly from O'Toole to Gaydon, and from Gaydon to Misset. "Surely it is simple enough," he replied. "Our future Queen is held in prison. It is our duty as faithful subjects of our royal master to get her out of prison."

This time O'Toole and Gaydon said nothing—

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O'Toole because he was too much surprised for speech; Gaydon because he had recovered his habitual conviction that when Wogan said a thing he meant it.

But Misset persisted in questioning, persisted in a slightly ironic scepticism. "My dear Wogan," he asked, "do you seriously propose that you and I and our friends here, like some of the paladins in the story-books, should set about rescuing this fair princess from her enchanted castle with our own hands?"

Wogan nodded cheerfully. "That is exactly what I propose," he said; and then, slapping the table smartly with his hand, he cried, in a louder voice, "Zooks, man, there are mighty few things that one Irish gentleman cannot accomplish, and nothing in the wide world ought to be impossible to four of us."

O'Toole was obviously swept to Wogan's side. "Hurroo!" he cried, and applied himself again to the flagon, with the air of a man whose doubts have been entirely satisfied.

Misset stroked his chin thoughtfully.

Gaydon spoke. "You talk big," he said.

Wogan beamed upon him. "Why not? Plague take the prim ones! Big words are the trumpets of big thoughts, the torches of big deeds. When a man tells himself that he can fight the world single-handed, well—he may lose the battle, but, at least, he'll lose it in the grand manner."

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"Philosopher," Misset commented, dryly. It was evident that to him the difficulties of the enterprise still remained difficulties.

Wogan laughed and continued: "But truly, boys, for all my bluster, the enterprise is no such tremendous business. Though I swagger like a swashbuckler, I have planned like a diplomatist. My campaign is mapped out, and I fire my first shot to-day."

"How so?" Gaydon asked, visibly eager.

Wogan began to explain: "The usurper's Whig ministers have hatched a plot—a whiff of it came to me by a lucky chance. In order to make sure that my fair Princess shall not marry my royal master they propose to marry her to some one else."

O'Toole looked surprised. "The devil they do!" he cried.

Misset was still the interrogator. "And that some one is?" he asked, and paused.

Wogan went on. "A spalpeen that calls himself the Prince of Niemen. So long as my Lord Stanhope fills his pockets with guineas he would marry the devil's sister, let alone such an angel maid as Sobieski's daughter."

O'Toole banged the table and voiced his indignation with an emphatic, "Damn the rascal!"

Wogan continued: "I have also learned that the usurper's people in London are sending out a special envoy to the Emperor of Austria to further this damnable marriage. This envoy is to visit

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Innsbruck on his way to see that the Princess is closely caged, and to try and persuade her to abandon our King."

Gaydon looked at his friend with a slightly ironic smile. "You have got no time to lose," he said.

Wogan answered him briskly: "And I am not going to lose any." As he spoke he drew a folded map from his breast pocket, and, opening it, spread it out upon his knee and pointed to it with his finger. "Here is a map," he said, "that shows us what we have to do. Here is Innsbruck in the dominions of the Emperor of Austria, where our Princess lies a prisoner. Here is Rome, in the States of the Church, where our King sits waiting for his sweet lady. Our business is to carry our Queen across the chessboard of Europe, from there to there."

Gaydon stroked his chin. "It's a mighty long way," he said, thoughtfully.

"It's a long way, sure enough," Wogan admitted; "but it's only part of it that's troublesome. Do you see this line here on the map not far from a little village called Peri?"

Misset nodded. "I do," he said.

"Well," Wogan went on, "that line marks the boundary of the dominions of the Emperor of Austria, and that little village lies in the territory of the States of Venice, where Austrian law does not run, and where Austrian pursuit—if we are pursued—should come to a halt."

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"All very fine," Misset commented, "but you know as well as I do that if you are pursued your pursuers are not likely to be stopped by a nice sense of international etiquette from laying hands on you even in Venetian territory."

"True for you," Wogan agreed, heartily, "but I have taken my precautions against that same chance. There is a certain good friend of mine, the Baron of Winkitz, that is happening to be forming a small hunting-party in the neighborhood of that little village of Peri—quite by accident, of course."

"Of course," Gaydon echoed.

Wogan continued: "He will have quite a number of armed servants and peasants at his back, so that soon after we have crossed the frontier into the States of Venice we shall find a little army ready to escort us, and to defend us, if need be, against illegal attack. How's that?"

Gaydon and O'Toole appeared to be convinced by their friend's arguments, but Misset still had an objection to raise. "It is all right as far as that end of the enterprise is concerned," he said. "But how about the beginning? How are you going to get the young lady out of her prison?"

"That is easy," Wogan answered, briskly.

"What is your plan?" Gaydon questioned.

"Simple enough," Wogan responded. "Smuggle a substitute into the castle of Innspruck to take the Princess's place while she slips out of the castle

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and races posthaste to Rome, with us for her bodyguard."

"Well done!" O'Toole applauded.

"But there are not enough of us for my purpose," Wogan added.

"I thought," Gaydon commented, dryly, "you said four Irishmen were enough for any enterprise?"

"So I said," Wogan agreed, "and so I think. But it isn't men I'm thinking of now; it's women we want."

O'Toole's face had already expressed all the astonishment it had room for. Had he possessed another face it would scarcely have served to set forth the amazement which now found voice in the explosive repetition of the single word, "Women!"

"Two women," Wogan explained.

His questioner was upon him again. "What for?" Misset asked.

"Why," Wogan replied, "by my scheme we shall want a girl to take the place of the Princess and play her part while the Princess is whisking away to Rome."

Gaydon nodded approval. "Very true."

Misset questioned again. "But the other woman; why do you want her?"

Wogan explained in a voice that seemed to suggest that explanation was scarcely necessary. "Sure you would not expect a princess like the Princess Clementina, a daughter of the Sobieskis, and a

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future Queen of England, to go trapesing round the world for sport with no closer company than four men-at-arms? She must have her lady-in-waiting."

"Of course she must," O'Toole agreed, emphatically.

"But where," Misset asked, "are you going to find these women?"

Wogan smiled as he replied: "Misset can answer that question for me."

Misset gasped. "Do you mean—" he began, and paused.

Wogan explained: "I mean that if there's no braver soul than Misset in Dillon's regiment, there's no sweeter slip of Eve among women than Misset's wife."

"That's true for you," Misset said, in a voice of hearty agreement.

Wogan rested his hand gently on Misset's shoulder and addressed him very earnestly. "I want Mistress Misset," he said, "with her consent and yours, my friend, to accompany our Princess on her ride to Rome."

Misset answered him frankly: "I am sure you can count on Mistress Misset as on myself. But I will bring her in."

He rose to leave the room, but Wogan stayed him. "Wait a moment," he said. "There's the girl that is to take the Princess's place and play her part as long as she can in her absence, to give

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us a good start. Will Jane Gordon be willing to play that part?"

O'Toole stared in wonder. "Jane Gordon?" he repeated, in an astonished voice.

"I can answer for my wife," Misset said, gravely, "but my wife's cousin must answer for herself."

"Is it a dangerous undertaking for the girl?" Gaydon asked.

Wogan shook his head. "No," he said, firmly. "Of course, she will be found out sooner or later, and maybe they'll detain her for a bit while they raise the hue and cry after us. But they'll let her go soon enough when the Princess gets to Rome."

Here O'Toole interposed with a magnificent gesture. "You leave Jane to me," he said. "Jane and I are very good friends. We understand each other. I'll wager that Jane will go if I ask her to."

Wogan looked at the giant with a smile. "Come, that's mighty convenient," he admitted. He turned to Misset. "Will you bring in the ladies, Misset?" he asked. "Will you prepare them for my proposition?"

"I will," Misset answered, and left the room.

Gaydon put a question. "How are you going to get the girl into the place?"

"I shall take her in myself," Wogan answered, calmly.

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O'Toole extended a pair of mighty palms in amazement. "Good Lord! how?" he asked.

"Not as myself," Wogan continued. "You heard me speak but now of a British envoy. Well, I shall be that British envoy."

"How will you contrive that same?" Gaydon asked.

Wogan was prompt to explain. "Sir Timothy Wynstock, the British envoy, is coming to-day to this town, to this inn."

"To this town?" O'Toole echoed.

Gaydon echoed, "To this inn?"

Wogan continued his explanation. "He is coming here, to meet, as he thinks, the Prince of Niemen, the rascal that wants to marry our Princess. Really, he comes to meet me."

"To meet you?" O'Toole exclaimed.

Wogan leaned forward between the two men and spoke in a slightly lower voice. "Yes. It came to me by a side wind that the knavish pair had agreed to meet here to settle the details of their rascally bargaining. Sir Timothy is due to arrive this morning. The Prince of Niemen can scarcely get here till this afternoon. By the time he arrives I hope to have settled the Briton's business and to be well on my way to Innspruck."

O'Toole looked mystified. "I'm afraid I don't quite understand," he confessed.

"What are you going to do?" Gaydon asked.

Wogan explained: "Why, when the Briton ar-

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rives and asks for the Prince of Niemen I shall present myself as that shabby, sham gentleman."

O'Toole stared with round eyes of wonder. "Will he believe you?"

"Why not?" Wogan asked. "I can talk with a high Dutch accent, I promise you."

"But what follows?" Gaydon questioned.

"It's as easy as kiss my hand," Wogan answered, gayly. "Mr. Commissioner will never suspect me. He will drink with me as freely as you please. And he shall drink, by Christopher! I have here in readiness a flask of Rhenish wine, and a carafe of water to boot, if either of us should be in the mind to temper our wine." He paused and looked at his two friends gayly.

O'Toole was still unenlightened. "Well," he questioned, "what then?"

"There is my mine," Wogan answered, "ready to explode."

Gaydon shook his head. "I don't follow," he protested.

And O'Toole questioned eagerly: "Sure you can't bamboozle the Briton with Rhine wine and water?"

Wogan looked cunning. "The seeming Rhine wine," he said, "will be brandy over-proof. The seeming water will be the strongest Geneva that ever came out of Holland. I will fill my Briton a bumper of brandy and toast the King. He will swallow his liquor loyally, poor devil! and if he has

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any breath left he will gasp for water. I tilt a measure of the gin down his throat, and there is my gentleman, dead drunk and helpless."

Gaydon nodded approval. "Very pretty and ingenious," he declared, and rose to his feet as he spoke. "In the mean time, and in good time, here come the ladies."

V

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THE colloquy was interrupted by the entrance of Misset escorting his wife and his wife's cousin. Mistress Misset carried a smile on her handsome face, that had lost all sign of the fatigue of travel, and she hung affectionately on her husband's arm. It was plain that she was in a good humor with the world, but the girl, Jane Gordon, looked sullen and frowning, as one that was but ill-satisfied with immediate events. The moment the ladies came into the room O'Toole sprang to his feet with a noise and vehemence that suggested Enceladus upheaving Etna and rushed to Jane's side. But if the genial giant expected a genial reception he was much disappointed. The girl gave him the coolest of greetings, dipped a curtsy to Wogan and Gaydon, and then seated herself demurely in the chair O'Toole proffered, listening indifferently to the compliments that the tall soldier paid her. When Mistress Misset was also seated, Wogan glanced inquiringly at her husband, and Misset spoke in answer to the look.

"My wife," he said, with a proud note in his

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voice, "is rejoiced at the opportunity to show her zeal and devotion to our King."

Mistress Misset extended her sweet, smooth hands to the Chevalier. "I am that," she said, emphatically, "and it is delighted I am, Chevalier, that the good thought came to you to ask my help in this business. It is a cruel shame to keep King James and his pretty lady apart, and it is a proud woman I shall be if I can do anything to bring them together."

Wogan made her a courtly bow. His eyes were bright with gratitude, for he knew her and loved her, in the honorable way in which a true man may love the wife of his friend, and it delighted him to find that she answered to his knowledge and his love. "Indeed, madam," he declared, "without your aid the enterprise would be little less than impossible. Now that you have joined our ranks I feel more confident than ever of our success."

As he made an end of speaking, his eyes travelled from Mistress Misset's smiling face to the gloomy countenance of Jane, where she sat apart with the tall soldier by her side that strove unsuccessfully to entertain her. Mistress Misset followed the glance and understood it. "My cousin," she said, looking at Jane, though she addressed Wogan, "doesn't very rightly understand what you want her to do."

"Sure, it's the easiest thing in the world," O'Toole interposed, addressing Jane eagerly. "All you've got to do is to pretend to be another charming

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young lady for a short time, and that ought not to be difficult to any one so charming as yourself."

The poor gentleman's sweet words were wasted. The girl rose abruptly from her chair, pushed O'Toole and his compliments impatiently aside, and came forward to Wogan. "Stand aside, all of you," she said, sharply, to the others, "and let me have speech with the Chevalier!"

It was the way with those that knew Jane Gordon and loved her to yield her her will in those sudden, peremptory, passionate moods of hers. Misset and his wife occupied the long-abandoned settle. Gaydon took it upon him to replenish a dwindling fire. O'Toole went to the window and stared into the courtyard, drumming dolefully with his finger-tips upon one of the panes to masquerade his melancholy. Jane drew Wogan a little apart and, looking steadily in his eyes, questioned him: "Charles Wogan," she said, "what is it you want me to do?"

Wogan looked at her with a certain wistfulness. She was young, she was fair, she was desirable; he was asking much of her youth, and had nothing to give her in return. But the cause he served demanded, as it deserved, all sacrifices. The wheeling world and all its peoples existed for him at that hour only that an almost unknown princess should be safely carried to marriage with his royal master. "I want you," he said, gently, "to do a very brave thing that will help a very fair and gracious lady to pass from a prison to a palace."

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Jane suddenly lifted her lowered lids, and there shone a fierce flame in her eyes, as she looked with a passion of anger at Wogan. "Why should I do this?" the girl retorted.

Wogan met the look and understood it, and shut his wit against his understanding. There was only one thing of importance in the world. "Because," he answered, "it is the duty of all of us that serve the House of Stuart to be ready at any time to make any sacrifice in our power that may help our King."

Even as he spoke there came across his mind a wistful consciousness of all that had been done to serve the cause he served. He had a swift, miraculous vision of all the gallant men and good women that had given life and love, goods and gear, for the Stuart cause; the heroes and the heroines of the great war; the men of Worcester and the women of the Flight; the martyrs of Boyne Water; the faithful and fated of the Fifteen. Surely the memory of all these that had perished made the use of the maid Jane Gordon, as it would have made even the risk of her life, a little matter. If it was given to him to command that use and risk, he must needs do so for his master's sake.

Such thoughts lived in an instant; they dissipated at the sound of Jane Gordon's voice. The girl looked at him curiously. "Do you wish me to do this, Charles Wogan?" she asked.

"I wish you to do it," Wogan answered, "if you are willing to do it with a whole heart. I know

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Mistress Misset would be willing to take your place, but that cannot be. It is essential that Mistress Misset should act as the companion of the Princess during her flight, for a young, unmarried girl would not serve the turn." He paused for a moment, and then added, with a glance toward the window where a burly warrior stood apart in puzzled discomfiture, "Though if my friend O'Toole had his way, I take it, you would not long remain unmarried."

Jane tossed her head scornfully. "If you think that fool could please me, you are little less than a fool yourself," she said, sourly. She tightened her lips and her fingers for an instant, then she said, quietly, "What risk do you run in this business?"

"Faith," said Wogan, with a laugh, "if I fail I am likely to pay for it with my head. But the game is worth the stake."

The girl looked at him shrewdly. "Tell me," she said, "are you in love with this pretty Princess that you are so ready to risk your head for her?"

This time Wogan laughed heartily. "My dear girl," he answered, "how can you talk such nonsense? The Princess Clementina is the affianced bride of my master, King James, and if she were not, I have only seen the young lady for a few minutes at a court ceremonial, and even a wild Irishman like myself is not such touchable tinder."

He spoke lightly, but his thoughts were scarcely so light as his words. The girl's suggestion, the

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girl's innuendo, the girl's assault, had fired an unexpected train of memories. He saw again, with a strange, a staggering distinctness the High Hall at Ohlau, and the pompous ceremonials of the little court, the stars and the uniforms and embroidered coats of the men and the swelling hoops of the women, and in the midst of it all the figure of Clementina, very blithe, a little shy, altogether gay and debonair and delightful, greeting the unknown Irish gentleman so cheerfully and sweetly, and then being swept away on the high tide of pleasures to give other smiles and other greetings. He had remembered ever since the joy of that moment; was he now, for the idle speech of a forward child, to remember also the pain?

"I will be willing enough to help if you wish it," the girl said, "but it seems from what John says that I am to be left behind, and I do not like that part of the business. Must I be left behind?"

"I am afraid you must, Jane," Wogan answered, "if you consent to join our adventure. It is of the utmost importance that those who have the guardianship of the Princess Clementina should believe her to be still in their custody while she is really travelling as fast as she can toward Italy and liberty. The longer start we get the likelier are our chances. If I thought of you in this business, it was because I wished to deal only with those whom I knew well and trusted thoroughly. If there were any danger in the enterprise, that would

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not have deterred me from seeking your help, for I know you are not a girl to take fear of danger."

The girl flushed with pleasure at Wogan's words, and would have spoken, but Wogan stayed her with a smile and a raised hand, and continued: "I will not say that there may be no discomfort in this duty, but I can assure you there is no danger. You have only to play the part of the Princess for as long a time as you can, and when the trick is found out you will be released, and must join us as speedily as possible."

Jane kept silent for a few seconds, then she spoke slowly. "If you give me your word that you are not in love with this pretty Princess, I will do this thing for you."

Wogan was a little angry with the girl for her obstinacy, but he still spoke kindly. "My child," he said, "I have already answered your silly question. You must now make up your mind."

The girl extended her hand, and Wogan took it. "I will do this thing for you, Charles Wogan," she said; "but it is for you that I do it, mind; not for that great gaby over there," and she jerked a contemptuous shoulder in the direction of O'Toole.

Wogan felt more than a little embarrassed by the earnestness of the girl's words and the earnestness of the girl's look. She seemed to be at so little pains to disguise facts that he was so anxious to deny. But, after all, for him the important thing was that Jane should give her aid to the conspiracy,

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and the reason why she gave it was only of secondary importance. She was very plainly a romantic young woman, and one that had to be humored; but there could be no harm in humoring her for the sake of the cause; so Wogan gave her a warm pressure of the hand, and turning to the others announced that Mistress Jane had consented to take a part in their enterprise.

The assembled confederates then joined in a hasty council of war. It was arranged that Wogan should proceed that afternoon to Innsbruck with Jane as his companion. When the conditions under which she would have to travel were made plain to the girl, she again began to start objections, and once again her objections surrendered to the special request of Wogan. It was settled that Misset and his wife as one party, O'Toole and Gaydon as another, were to proceed also at a later hour to Innsbruck, where they were to arrive on a certain night. At Innsbruck they were to put up at an inn chosen by Wogan, the inn at which the coach was to be in readiness that was to prove the vehicle of freedom for the Princess. At that inn the four were to wait till Wogan joined them with the Princess in his company, if the enterprise was indeed successful.

Just as these arrangements had been agreed upon, O'Toole, that had withdrawn somewhat sulkily from the conference because of Jane's indifference to him and her deference to Wogan, and that had

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planted himself at the window overlooking the courtyard, turned to the company. "There is," he said, "a pompous-looking fellow that has just entered the inn, whom I take to be your Englishman."

Instantly the little committee dissolved. The ladies vanished. The men, according to Wogan's instructions, were to wait within hail. Wogan stretched himself comfortably upon the settle, and a few minutes later the landlord very obsequiously ushered into the room a person of quality.

The stranger was a solemn, pompous man, with a large body, a stolid carriage, and a florid face. He was dressed in a fashion of dignified discomfort that went well with his demeanor. In a word, he was dressed as a travelling Briton delighted to dress, in the mode of his own island, with a sovereign disregard for the fashions of alien races. Such as he would have shown on the steps of his house in St. James's Square, or in the Hall at St. Stephen's, so he showed himself when circumstances compelled him to wander—if he could ever be said to wander—abroad. He was not one of the many English of his time that, having made the grand tour in youth, returned to their home Italianized or Gallicized. He was sturdily patriotic, and cherished an intense dislike of all foreigners, except, indeed, the Dutch and the Hanoverians, that had been good enough to supply his country with monarchs that were, he devoutly thanked Heaven, very different from their Scottish

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predecessors. He carried himself with an air of great importance, which seemed to suggest that the earth he trod on gained in specific gravity from the pressure of his soles. His appearance suggested rather the honest country gentleman, good across country, an authority on the game laws, and interested in the crops, than a skilled diplomatist. But in very fact the gentleman fancied himself not a little on his political dexterity, and as his Whiggism was unimpeachable, his means considerable, and his relatives influential, he had already enjoyed a fairly long career in the service of his country. His natural importance, the importance of the squire, the importance of the politician, was now essentially exaggerated by his sense of the greatness of the duties he was fulfilling. The journey across Europe for the purpose of thwarting the desires of a Stuart Pretender seemed to him, who under ordinary circumstances detested travel, an action at once in the highest degree enjoyable and in the highest degree meritorious. Next to the pleasure of seeing James the Third expiate the offence of his descent on Tower Hill came pleasure in the power of thwarting him in his wish to marry the Princess. It was, therefore, with an almost regal port that he entered the common-room of the "Blue Moon" Inn and looked about him confidently, evidently counting to meet at once the individual with whom he had his appointment. He had not, indeed, expected to meet the Prince until the evening of that

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day, but he had just been told of his premature arrival, and to his sense of personal and invested dignity a foreign prince, for all his rank, was never a man that should suffer himself to keep a British envoy waiting.

However, and happily for his immediate peace of mind, the envoy of Lord Stanhope was not kept waiting. As he flung his heavy travelling cloak across the back of a chair, he became heavily aware of Wogan, who sprang from the settle and advanced to meet him, all smiles of affability, and addressed him in some sentences of well-turned French, to which his ingenuity allowed him to attach a strongly Teutonic accent. The envoy bowed stiffly and inquired in a French that was not nearly as good as Wogan's, but was still business-like enough to serve its turn, "if he had the honor of addressing the Electoral Prince of Niemen."

"You have that same," Wogan replied, with great cheerfulness. That, at least, was the idiom that formed itself in Wogan's mind, and that he interpreted into appropriate French. Then, as Sir Timothy preserved a diplomatic silence, Wogan continued the conversation. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Sir Timothy Wynstock?" he asked.

Wynstock nodded. "You have," he said, laconically.

Wogan made him another elaborate bow. "I could not wait," he declared, "till this evening, so came on to-day."

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Wynstock bowed stiffly. "I am indeed honored at the privilege of meeting your Serenity," he said.

"Not at all, not at all," Wogan protested. "Pray be seated."

Wynstock slowly lowered himself into the chair indicated by his companion. "Your Serenity is very good," he said, and said no more.

Wogan began again. "Well, what is the latest decision of our dear friends in England? Do they accept me for a candidate for the hand of the delectable Princess?"

Wynstock answered in his dry, high, dignified voice: "I am personally instructed by my Lord Stanhope to assure you that he is very conscious of your services and anxious for your success."

"His Lordship is too good," Wogan said, and smiled, self-consciously.

Wynstock went on: "His Lordship further instructed me to add that in the event of your success—which can scarcely be doubted since the Emperor is agreed to further your suit—your name will be placed on the secret service list of the Privy Purse for a pension of a thousand pounds English a year."

Wogan allowed his face to express gratified cupidity. "His Lordship is most accommodating," he said.

Wynstock continued in the same tone of voice in which he would have answered a question in the House of Commons: "I have not, naturally,

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these dispositions set down in black-and-white. To do so were impossible at the present stage of the negotiations, but you may take my word for my Lord Stanhope."

"I have no doubt of it," Wogan said, cheerfully. "And what is your Excellency's next move in the game?"

Wynstock raised a protesting finger. "If your Serenity will permit me, I cavil at your phrase. We in England do not regard politics as a game. We are serious statesmen, I am pleased to believe, earnest, honest."

"You are all that," Wogan said, heartily; then he added, as if it were an afterthought, "and more."

Wynstock continued with a slightly annoyed air, as of one that resented the turn the conversation had taken. "I will permit myself, therefore, to speak not of the next move in the game, but of the next step in the negotiations."

"By all means," Wogan agreed, blandly. "What is your next step?"

"My next step," Wynstock continued, stolidly, "is to proceed with all convenient speed to Innspruck, there to see and reason with this foolish young woman."

"Come, come, Excellency," Wogan said, in a voice of gentle protest, "if you are speaking of the Princess Clementina, I beg you to remember that you are speaking of a lady whom you regard as my future wife."

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Wynstock made his usual stiff salutation, a jerky nod and a thrust-forward stiff chin. "I ask your Serenity's pardon," he said, gruffly "What you say is very true. I propose to see and reason with the Princess Clementina."

"And persuade her to see the marital merits of the Prince of Niemen?" Wogan suggested.

Wynstock nodded again. "Exactly," he said.

Wogan questioned: "And if she declines to see his—my merits?" He paused, and Wynstock answered ponderously:

"I will point out to the headstrong minx—pardon me, to the Princess Clementina—that until she does make up her mind she is likely to remain in somewhat uncomfortable captivity in Innspruck."

The Englishman seemed to think that the interview was at an end, and to expect a sign from his companion to convey as much, but Wogan, after a moment's silence, began again:

"Pray tell me—I am so ignorant of your ways—you don't feel any qualms of conscience about this business, you don't feel as if you were doing dirty work?"

"Dirty work!" Wynstock echoed, so startled for a moment out of his composure that his voice was almost at the pitch of a scream. "Your Highness amazes me. No work can be dirty work that is done for my sovereign; no work can be dirty work that serves, however slightly, to hamper or baffle the machinations of the Pretender."

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"Your sentiments do you credit," Wogan said, slowly. "Faith, we must crush a cup to the King."

As he spoke he rose, and going toward the dresser took from it a long and noble flagon that looked like a flask of Rhine wine, a large jug that seemingly contained water, and a pair of ample glasses. He placed these on the table and lifted the flagon high in air.

"Here, your Excellency," he said, enthusiastically, "we have a glass of ripe old Rhenish wine such as should warm your heart when you drink it to a loyal toast." As he spoke he filled each of the capacious glasses to the rim, gave one to Wynstock, and taking the other in his hand, raised it in such a way that the hand that held the glass was directly over the jug of water.

Wynstock observed his action with attention. "Egad, sir," he said, "if you held your glass so in England we should look at you curiously."

"Why so, pray?" Wogan said, in affected surprise.

Wynstock explained: "Why, as you stand now, your glass is exactly above this jug of water."

"What then?" Wogan asked, with the same air of amiable innocence.

"Why, your Serenity," Wynstock replied, almost smiling at the simplicity of his companion, "when rascally Jacobites in England find themselves in company where the King's health is given, they contrive to have a glass of water hard by their

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elbow, so that when they lift and drink the King, they drink the King over the water. Do you take me?"

Wogan laughed boisterously. "Vastly whimsical, indeed," he declared. "But no James's man would be at the pains to do the like here, seeing that he would be on the same side of the sea. This water was but brought if you found the Rhenish a thought heady and needed qualifying."

Wynstock, that was fairly famous as a hard-drinking man in a hard-drinking age, resented the implied imputation. "Your Serenity is very considerate," he said, stiffly, "but I thank God I can drink with any man."

Wogan applauded him. "Capital! Bumpers, then, bumpers! Without equivocation I give you the King."

The big Englishman instantly rose to his feet, lifted the glass to his lips in response to the seeming loyal toast, and without hesitation tossed the liquor down his throat. While he did so Wogan lowered his own glass to the table again. As the fierce fluid went down Wynstock's throat, he reeled as if he had been shot, and, clutching at the end of the table, he gasped wildly, "Water, water, I am choking!"

Instantly Wogan poured a full glass from the water-jug and held it to Wynstock, who snatched it eagerly.

"I told you it was strong," Wogan said quietly,

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as he watched Wynstock tilting the contents of the second glass into his mouth.

Wynstock gave a great choking cry, the glass dropped from his hand with a crash upon the floor; he extended his arms as if he would advance upon Wogan; then, with a kind of groan, he dropped, a huddled mass of crumpled flesh, into his chair, his head lolling on his breast, and his breathing coming stertorously. Wogan looked at him with a satisfied smile. Then he promptly pounced upon his victim, and, opening his coat, calmly possessed himself of the drugged man's papers and went through them deliberately, selecting such as might be of service to him for his purpose. Of these, of course, the letters of credentials which Wynstock carried from my Lord Stanhope to the Governor of Innspruck were the most important. But there was, besides, a letter from his Lordship to Sir Timothy, which Wogan read through carefully and preserved with a frowning face, for it renewed and emphasized the demands of the government for increased rigor on the Emperor's part in dealing with the captive Princess.

VI

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WOGAN'S moment of triumph was suddenly interrupted. The door of the room was flung open, and O'Toole dashed in in a state of high excitement, hardly glancing at the figure in the chair, whose helpless condition announced the complete success of Wogan's plan. He waved his great hands in a tragic manner, and shouted wildly, "Oh, Wogan, my poor boy, here is a pretty kettle of fish!"

Wogan, without interrupting his business of examining the Englishman's papers, asked quietly: "What is the matter?"

O'Toole sought to explain coherently, his words huddling together and tumbling over each other in his confusion: "A horseman has just ridden into the courtyard asking after your Englishman. It is the Prince of Niemen himself, bad luck to him!"

"The Prince of Niemen!" Wogan said, and whistled thoughtfully. This untimely arrival threatened to interfere with his schemes. He was thinking busily, while O'Toole continued:

"Gaydon's keeping him in talk for the moment,

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asking him the latest news from Vienna, but that cannot last long, and what is to be done at all?"

While O'Toole was gabbling and gasping, Wogan had already made up his mind. "That's easily answered," he replied, composedly. "I have been Niemen for the Englishman, I will be the Englishman for Niemen. Sure, I have his credentials all right." As he spoke he patted his breast-pocket, to which he had confided the precious papers. "First of all, let us get rid of our friend. I expect he will have a bit of a headache to-morrow, but otherwise he will be none the worse."

Under the steady influence of Wogan's calm, O'Toole succeeded in restraining his emotion. Between them the pair lifted the unconscious Englishman from his seat and carried him, snoring heavily, into an adjoining room, where they laid him on a couch. When they had returned to the common-room and closed the door upon the senseless envoy, O'Toole again questioned his companion. "Well, what next?" he asked.

"Listen!" Wogan said, earnestly. "This Prince will possibly, even probably, want to accompany me to Innsbruck. I will try to persuade him to follow me. If I fail—"

He paused, and O'Toole repeated, anxiously, "If you fail?"

"Why, then," Wogan continued, "as I can't very well, in my character as a British plenipotentiary, force a fight upon the fellow, do you think one of

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you could manage to pick a quarrel with this unpleasant gentleman?"

O'Toole laughed joyously. "Faith," he answered, "it's never difficult to pick a quarrel."

Wogan looked dubious. "I have heard," he said, "that the Prince is a handy man with the small-sword, and that he uses it after the Italian fashion, which is disconcerting to gentlemen unfamiliar with that method."

O'Toole made a magnificent gesture of disdain. "There is no form or usage of the sword," he declared, "that is not familiar to me. Leave the gentleman in my hands and sleep easy."

Wogan eyed his companion doubtfully. It is possible that at another time he would have been less ready to accept O'Toole's offer, for he knew O'Toole's nature too well to be able to place entire confidence in his braggadocio; but he knew him also for a good swordsman, and he had in his extremity to take the chance. "I hope so," he said, slowly. "However, needs must—you know the tag of the adage."

O'Toole looked at him with a grieved expression on his ample face. "You pain me, Charles," he protested. "I've passed you my word for him."

The time was brief. The step of the enemy could already be heard upon the stair. Wogan drew O'Toole down to a side door that led by a small stair to the courtyard. "Wait below," he ordered. "If the fellow proves obstinate, I must

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leave him to you and the others. Wing him, kill him, do what you will with him between you, but be sure that he stays here."

O'Toole wrung his friend's hands. "Trust me," he promised, emphatically; "a nod is as good as a wink. I'll drill him as full of holes as an old wife's colander."

"Get out!" Wogan answered, briefly. He pushed O'Toole out of the room, hurriedly returned the masquerading brandy and the false water to the cupboard of the dresser, and, seating himself at the table, was sipping leisurely a glass of Hermitage when the door opened and the expected enemy entered.

His Serene Highness the Prince of Niemen was no longer in his first youth, nor, indeed, in his second youth, even allowing a generous margin for that ecstatic if undefinable period. At no time can he have been accepted as comely, according to the canons of comeliness that have, shall we say, persisted from the days when a type of beauty was admired and established in a beautiful city on the edge of a beautiful sea. His Serene Highness's features were heavy, his Serene Highness's complexion was of a dingy paleness—he was one of those men whom habitual intemperance and incontinence fail to flush—his Serene Highness's nose was overlong, his Serene Highness's chin was overfull, his Serene Highness's eyes were overbulging for general acceptance, general admiration.

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The shell might have been forgiven if the nature to which it formed an envelope had been other than it was. But his Serene Highness had a spirit more mischievous even than his exterior could suggest. Behind those bulging eyes of his there grinned a malicious fiend. Drink and debauchery had degraded the strength of his body to some degree, but the mind that housed in his hull of flesh was one that neither drink nor indulgence could degrade. It began, as it were, at the bottom of humanity's ladder; it was of kin with the savage, with the cave-man; beneath its mark of modishness, its trappings of silk and ribbon and lace, it lurked as a wild beast lurks behind cage-bars. Yet he carried himself with a courtly manner, aped from the gallants of France, and transmitted traditions of ceremonious generations were potent enough to lend him the show of dignity.

Wogan rose to his feet and saluted the stranger. "Have I the honor," he asked, "to address his Serene Highness the Prince of Niemen?"

"Yes," the Prince answered, and questioned in his turn: "Sir Wynstock, I presume?"

"Sir Timothy Wynstock," Wogan corrected, courteously. "I have the honor to submit to your Highness this letter from my Lord Stanhope."

As he spoke he handed to the Prince the letter which he had so recently extracted from the pocket of the unconscious Wynstock. The Prince gravely seated himself with a gesture to Wogan to follow

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his example—which Wogan promptly did—opened the letter, read it slowly through, and then placed it in his own pocket.

“Excellent!” he said. “And now, my dear Sir Wynstock—”

Wogan interrupted him. “A thousand pardons; Sir Timothy Wynstock, Sir Timothy.”

The Prince made a gesture of apology. “Ah, so! I shall never understand your English titles. And now, my dear Sir Timothy, what is the next move in our little game of queen-catching?”

“I am myself about to proceed to Innspruck,” Wogan replied, “to lay the wishes of my sovereign before this ill-advised young lady.”

The Prince looked approval. “Good, good!” he said. “By God! I will go with you. I have left my servants at the ‘Three Kings’”—this was the great inn of the place—“to meet you here alone according to our understanding. They will be ready to start whenever you please.”

This declaration was not at all to Wogan’s taste, and he strove against it. “If your Highness will forgive me,” he suggested, “I think it would be well for me to herald you and prepare the way.”

Wogan’s proposal did not appear to please the Prince. “Curse it, sir,” he protested, “when a man’s in love he does well to show hot blood. Yes, I will ride with you to Innspruck. Enough!”

He spoke the last word with the imperiousness of one accustomed to have his own way. Wogan,

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seeing that it was useless to contend further, bowed acceptance. "Your Highness's wish is my law," he said, quietly. He prayed in his heart that O'Toole's swordsmanship might be inspired that afternoon. The Prince gave a nod of approval and rose to his feet, as if to suggest that the interview was at an end and that they might well be jogging.

But Wogan had more to say. "With your Highness's permission," he began, "I have, on behalf of those I serve, a few formal questions to put to you with regard to this matter."

The Prince seated himself again and took snuff. "Speak, sir," he said, proffering the box to Wogan.

Wogan took a pinch and went on: "I am instructed to inquire whether your Highness is troubled by any scruples as to your part in this business?"

The Prince raised his heavy eyebrows in a sneering surprise. "Scruples, my dear Sir Wynstock?" he asked. "What the devil are you talking about?"

Wogan explained: "Why, your Highness had better know that there are a number of persons, even in England, who regard it as an action unbecoming of a gentleman to force his attentions upon a lady against that lady's will."

The Prince shrugged his shoulders contemptuously. "My good sir," he said, lazily, "there are prudes and puritans everywhere."

Wogan continued, unheeding the Prince's inter-

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ruption: "It seems to be their whimsical opinion that for a personage of your Highness's rank to lend himself to a conspiracy against a woman's peace—I am, of course, only using their words—and so to lend himself for the sake of a money bribe—their very offensive phrase—is to play the part of a very ill-conditioned scoundrel—their naughty language, Highness."

The Prince stared at the speaker as if he thought he had taken leave of his senses. "Pray, sir," he asked, "why do you repeat all this rigmarole to me?"

"Only," Wogan replied, quietly, "that your Highness might know the exact position of affairs, and if he felt any compunction, any reluctance, for playing the part for which we pay him, we should be more than unwilling to press him to act against his finer feelings."

The Prince frowned, accentuating the native ugliness of his countenance. "Let me tell you, Sir Wynstock Timothy," he said, harshly, "that you use mighty strange language. Are you backing out of this business?"

"Certainly not, your Highness," Wogan said, warmly. "If you were to fail us we should find some other less delicate—gentleman to serve our turn. I only wished to be quite sure of your attitude toward a somewhat unfortunate young lady."

"You may be quite sure, Sir Wynstock Timothy—" the Prince began.

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But Wogan again interrupted him. "Forgive me; Sir Timothy Wynstock," he corrected, suavely.

"Ah, yes," the Prince admitted, impatiently, and returned to his theme. "You may be quite sure that I am loyal, hand, head, and heart to a government so generous as the government you represent. As for the young lady, I cannot consider her as unfortunate in becoming my consort. If I may say so without vainglory, I am a lady's man."

"And the woman," Wogan suggested, "is to be envied who earns your affections."

"Precisely," the Prince agreed, emphatically.

Wogan nodded. "Now, indeed, we understand each other," he said.

"Excellent!" the Prince approved. "When do we set out?"

Wogan answered apologetically. "I have some small private business to attend to," he pleaded. "In an hour's time I will attend your Highness at the bridge."

The Prince seemed impatient of delay. "The ardor of a lover," he said, "would urge me to immediate departure; but if your business cannot be postponed I will meet you at the bridge in an hour's time. If there were any decent drinking to be had in this tavern, I might amuse myself well enough, but I suppose that it is not to be hoped for, and that I had better return to the 'Three Kings.'"

"Your Highness," Wogan replied, reassuringly,

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"is fortunately mistaken. Unpretentious as this place is, I can assure you its cellars shelter some bottles of Hermitage that are worthy of the Emperor's table."

The Prince's eyes gleamed. "Do you say so?" he said. "I will see if your judgment in wine is reliable."

"I think," Wogan assured him, "your Highness will be pleased. In an hour, then."

"In an hour," the Prince agreed.

Wogan saluted him and paused with his hand on the door. "Ask for the 'Green Seal,'" he said, and vanished.

The Prince slapped the table loudly, and the landlord appeared in prompt obedience to the summons. He took the Prince's instructions to bring up a couple of bottles of the Green Seal Hermitage and left the room.

The Prince was left alone to his reflections for a few moments, but very soon those reflections were interrupted by the arrival of more company. The Prince looked curiously up, to see that a couple of gentlemen in the uniform of Dillon's regiment had seated themselves at a window-table and were occupying themselves with a game of dominoes. With one of them he remembered having exchanged some words on his arrival at the inn. He gave them no further heed, and a moment later the landlord entered the room with the wine the Prince had ordered. When the host had gone the door of the

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room again opened and another person came in, a big, burly giant of a man whose size attracted the Prince's attention, for he had a liking for tall soldiers.

The new-comer, who also was habited in the uniform of Dillon's regiment, paused for a moment, looking round the room, and then advanced toward the table where the Prince faced his bottle of Hermitage. He looked fixedly first at the bottle, and then at the now astonished Prince.

"I think," O'Toole said, "there is some mistake here. That is the Green Seal Hermitage."

The Prince stared sternly at his interlocutor. "There is no mistake, sir," he replied, coldly. "I ordered the Green Seal Hermitage."

"And there you made a mistake," O'Toole replied. "The Green Seal Hermitage at the 'Blue Moon' is reserved for the gentlemen of Dillon's when they visit Strasbourgh, and I do not think you are one of us."

The Prince waved a perfumed handkerchief airily between himself and O'Toole. "My good sir," he said, composedly, "this is a public inn, and its cellars are at the command of any gentleman who may honor it with his presence. I have ordered this bottle of wine, and I propose to drink it. I shall do so with greater pleasure if you will kindly remove your abnormal bulk from my presence."

O'Toole glared furiously at the Prince, "Do

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you mean to imply," he asked, angrily, "that the company of an officer of Dillon's regiment is disagreeable to you?"

"I imply nothing," the Prince said, coolly. "I assert very plainly that your company is extremely disagreeable to me, and I command you to withdraw."

O'Toole struck the table a blow with his first that threatened the equilibrium of the Hermitage, and made the glasses rattle. "Sir," he shouted in a whirlwind voice, "you have insulted me, and I demand immediate satisfaction."

The Prince looked languidly round him, glancing at the domino-players. "Is there no one here who can remove this drunken fellow?" he questioned.

O'Toole's simulated rage flamed anew at the words, and without more ado he flicked the Prince lightly in the face with his glove. Instantly the Prince sprang to his feet, and instantly also the two gentlemen who had been playing dominoes in the corner of the room rose quickly and came between the Prince and O'Toole. Gaydon and Misset assured the offended Prince that O'Toole was a gentleman of old descent and an officer of high standing in Dillon's regiment, and that there could be no derogation of dignity in crossing swords with him. Misset offered his services to the Prince as second, and suggested a quiet field in the neighborhood which would serve for the purpose of the encounter. The Prince, who had quite recovered

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his momentarily shaken composure, amiably accepted Misset's offer. Gaydon volunteered to act as second for O'Toole, and a few moments later the gentlemen left the inn together in the direction of the river.

VII

THE CARDINAL

THE Cardinal Gualterio was a man who very tranquilly regarded all human beings, men and women alike, whatever their seeming rank in life, kings or beggars, queens or harlots, with a democratic eye of quality. This was natural enough in a great prince of a great church which played its great part still in the government of the world, and if it could no longer make and unmake kings and break the pride of emperors in an open display of its powers, still exercised a mighty influence upon the course of European affairs, and swayed the destinies of states. But the church had servants better calculated to impress a sense of its power and majesty upon the vulgar mind than Cardinal Gualterio. A casual observer privileged to enter the presence of the Cardinal would, if he were an unimaginative person, see little in his host to inspire him with admiration, enthusiasm, awe, or, indeed, reverence, other than that essential to his rank. The Cardinal was neither the austere type of ecclesiastic who seemed to carry to a later day the aim of Jerome and the tradition of Anthony nor the

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jovial, overworldly ecclesiastic who rivalled the merriest layman in gayety, who wore the colors of the church as no more than a glowing uniform, and who was in his social, political, and mundane opinions pretty much of the temper of the Borgias. Cardinal Gualterio was a man of middle height, of ample but not uncomfortable bulk, smooth of skin and something slow of motion, as was natural in one of his weight. His whole plump person seemed to breathe amiability; his pink face carried scarcely a wrinkle, except when its habitual smile deepened into a laugh and puckered the flesh about the lips and at the eyes, an event which happened frequently, for the Cardinal was given to a frank indulgence in good-humored mirth, which earned him much affection from the many. Everything, or almost everything, that happened in the great drama of life seemed to divert him. His attitude was, or seemed to be, like that of a child that is taken to a playhouse and applauds alike the tragedy and the comedy, the march of the wars and the wooing of the lovers, the trumpets of the heroes and the kisses of the sweethearts — seeing in the whole thing no more than an entertainment, and conscious at the back of his brain that neither the joys nor sorrows which he witnesses are real. The Cardinal patently took the most kindly interest in the affairs of those with whom he was directly concerned, but he always showed the same air of genial solicitude for the welfare of people who were

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only brought into contact with him for a brief, accidental moment. Many of these latter left the Cardinal's presence with a sense of pleasure at finding that a great man could be so affable, and a sense of wonder that so affable and so every-day a man could attain to anything like greatness in the hierarchy of the church. Indeed, the general impression that ruled about the Cardinal was that he was a very worthy personage and a very excellent churchman, but that he was wanting in all those greater qualities which often have converted princes of the church into powerful statesmen. The Cardinal was perfectly well aware of the popular impression of his merits, and it afforded him an amount of pleasure that at times seriously rivalled the calm satisfaction that he derived in his moments of leisure—and he contrived to have many such moments—from his medals and statues, his manuscripts and cameos, his bustos and basso-relievos and inscribed tablets.

The Cardinal was perfectly well aware of the impression he thus created, and it served to amuse him as the rest of the events amused him in the great playhouse of existence, where he was pleased to pretend that he was no more than a mere spectator, while all the time he was pulling the strings of many mannikins. Serenely sure that it really mattered very little in the end to the great institution of which he was at once a humble and a wonderful servant how the events of Europe

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shaped themselves, what king triumphed here or failed yonder, what favorite flattered and ambled, what partisan sundered territories, or what politician planned and schemed, he was able to smile placidly where the less indifferent could only frown futilely. He asserted freely enough that the power of his house was not of this world, and that human concerns of the baser sort were indifferent to him. What he really meant when he said this was that he was convinced that the strength of the church he served lay not so much in its direct and visible power over the pawns of the political game as in its ever-persisting, ever-widening influence among the peoples of the earth. He was a prince of the church, indeed, and it diverted him to play with temporal princes; but he believed in his heart that the power of that church was based upon the democracy. In the mean time, however, princes were the order of the day, and James Stuart was one of the princes who came into his game, and the business of James Stuart brought Charles Wogan to the Cardinal's knowledge.

If the Cardinal had not been too wise to hamper his life by the formation of likings he would have admitted to himself, if not to others, that he liked Wogan. There was something in the man's direct simplicity, in his courage, his coolness, and his humor that appealed very keenly to that fighting strain in the Cardinal's composition which he inherited from a belligerent ancestry. The Cardinal

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himself was convinced that the affairs of the world are finally to be settled by wise men, preferably ecclesiastics, who sit quietly in comfortable rooms and pull the strings that direct the puppets, whether the puppets be princes or peasants, emperors or shepherds. But he liked the men of Wogan's type for whom life is a bivouac and the world a battleground for chivalrous gentlemen to whom a cause is everything, and their own concerns little or nothing. Of such men the Cardinal had never met a better example than Wogan, and the even temperature of his heart warmed a little in Wogan's company, and he listened with approval to Wogan's plans and amiably commended Wogan's enthusiasm.

The Cardinal was an astute man, and he was not overconfident of the success of the Stuart cause. He knew England and the English people better than most other men in Italy, and the failure of the rising in 1715 had impressed him more seriously, because he happened to be better informed, than it impressed many who desired a Stuart restoration too ardently to recognize uncomfortable realities. But if he was not confident where others were overconfident, he was quite willing that nothing should be left undone that might bring about a consummation desirable in itself. He had heartily approved, therefore, of the marriage which Wogan had proposed for his royal master, and he was now equally prepared to approve of the methods sug-

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gested by Wogan for carrying out that marriage in the teeth of an opposition headed by an emperor and a king. The Cardinal had a fancy for fairy tales, and the mental picture of Wogan from Ireland pitting himself against a couple of great powers tickled him as his infantile wits had been tickled by stories of giant-killers.

If Wogan's plan succeeded it afforded the exiled Stuart another aid toward the regaining of his lost kingdom, and Cardinal Gualterio was as anxious as any of James's partisans to see a third of the name seated upon the throne of England. If Wogan's plan miscarried, it would be treated as the independent adventure of a wild-hearted, wild-headed, irresponsible Irish privateer who could be readily disclaimed by those in authority, and who very certainly would never resent the disclaimer. Therefore the Cardinal gave Wogan and Wogan's enterprise his blessing, and Wogan came and went across Europe in the furtherance of his design, returning time and again to the presence of the Cardinal to report the progress of his scheme. One of the first steps to be taken was to obtain the consent of the Prince of Poland to the device for his daughter's evasion, a consent which to Wogan's great delight he obtained, though with no little difficulty.

While the Chevalier Wogan was absent on his mission to the Prince of Poland there came on a day of December in that year, 1718, a letter to Cardinal Gu-

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alterio in his palace at Rome. His Eminence was the daily recipient of numerous letters, many of which annoyed, some of which amused, and a few of which interested him. Among his budget on this December day he chanced to find a letter which afforded him both interest and amusement. His secretary, Eusebio, had submitted it to his Eminence with a smile, and on the Cardinal's command proceeded to read it aloud.

The letter was written from Trent by one unknown to his Eminence. The writer asserted himself to be Edward Baron de Winquitz and to be a Swedish captain of cavalry. The Swedish gentleman, after many preliminary assurances of his respect for his Eminence and his devotion to the exiled Majesty of Britain, gave it very decidedly as his opinion that the negotiations attempted by the Papal See with the court of Austria for the purpose of effecting the liberation of the Princess Clementina Sobieski would prove of no avail. The valorous Swede appeared, indeed, to have a poor opinion of diplomatic negotiations. The Cardinal smilingly appreciated in every line of his letter the martial spirit that was all for the sword, and the Baron's orthography made it very plain that he had a poor opinion of the pen. He was convinced that in the clash of political forces and the ingenious adjustment of states against states lay a solution of the knotty problem of the balance of power in Europe.

As for the immediate matter in hand—namely,

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the captivity of the Princess Clementina—Winquitz was all for a bold handshake, and he made it plain that he conceived himself to be the man to deliver the daring blow, and that he placed himself entirely at his Eminence's service. He assured the Cardinal that he was at any moment prepared to effect the liberation of the Princess Clementina from her prison at Innsbruck by force of arms, if only he were provided by his Eminence with funds sufficient for the purpose. In other words, he was on his own showing a knight-errant of the best, and being, as was consistent with the ordinances of knight-errantry, a man of no great means, he needed the subsidy to make his chivalry a working fact. He gave the Cardinal some particulars of exalted friendships he had formed in Trent to serve as a guaranty for his good faith. He assured the Cardinal that when once a Swedish gentleman had pledged his devotion to a cause he was never to be turned away from it, and that for his own part he was prepared to shed the last drop of his blood in the service of his much-wronged Britannic Majesty.

When the reading had concluded the Cardinal turned to Eusebio with a smile, and asked him if he had ever heard of the intrepid gentleman. The secretary shook his head. The world of Europe swarmed with Northern gentlemen, gallant or ungallant soldiers of fortune, all with names that sounded harsh to Italian ears and proved difficult for Italian memories. The secretary, however, in-

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formed his Eminence that the names cited by the Baron as friends of his were names of gentlemen of old descent and high standing in Trent and counted among the most eminent of the many persons that were privileged to carry the title of the Prince of Thun.

The Cardinal mused for a little space, playing as he did so with an antique dagger of exquisite workmanship that had once belonged to Cæsar Borgia. After a while he spoke to his secretary.

"We do not know," he said, "what manner of man this Swedish baron may be, but I am compelled at least to agree with him in his disbelief in the success of our negotiations for the liberation of the unhappy Princess. But that matter is in the hands of a gentleman in whom King James has every confidence, the Chevalier Wogan, and even if we were very sure that this gentleman from the North were all he represents himself to be, it would not be fair to the Chevalier to employ another in the enterprise on which he is engaged. Also, this gentleman may be a spy that offers his services in the hope of finding out what we ourselves would be at in the matter."

Eusebio ventured to observe that he thought he discerned a note of candor and frankness in the letter which contradicted the likelihood of the writer being a spy, and the Cardinal, still playing with his dagger, admitted that he agreed. It was finally decided that the secretary should write to

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the Baron a non-committing letter, and that they should wait until the return of the Chevalier Wogan and let him know of the gentleman's curious proposal. Thereupon the secretary drafted such a letter, which was duly dispatched, and thereafter the Cardinal dismissed the Baron from his thoughts, although not from his memory.

When Wogan on his return from his successful visit to the Prince of Poland, early in 1719, heard from the Cardinal of the valorous Swede's proposal, he instantly made up his mind to have an interview with the gentleman and see what might be made of him. It was Wogan's way in any enterprise never to neglect any opportunity, and he thought it possible that this Swede might prove useful. Whenever Wogan decided to do a thing he did it, if possible, at once, and therefore he lost no time in riding posthaste to Trent and waiting upon the Baron.

Wogan found the Baron taking the air in the garden of the villa of the Prince of Thun, and presented to him the letter which he carried from the Cardinal, a letter which said little more than that the bearer would explain his purpose. While the Baron studied the letter Wogan studied the Baron. He found the Baron very much what he had expected to find him, a somewhat showy, exuberant swashbuckler that was a trifle too fond of his sword to lend its services for nothing, but that might be relied upon to earn his pay when he was once en-

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gaged. His intimacy with the Prince of Thun might possibly prove to be slightly exaggerated, but Wogan could readily understand that the Swede's persistent heartiness of manner and bluff good-humor might make any gentleman, with a taste for characters, tolerate readily enough his companionship. He did not, however, commend himself to Wogan as an ally in his special enterprise. Wogan had made up his mind as to the men he wanted for his companions, men whom he knew thoroughly, men on whom he could confidently rely, men of his own race.

When the Baron had read the letter he twisted his mustaches to a fiercer curl and looked steadily at Wogan. Wogan explained his position, and expressed his regret that, as means had been already taken to effect the liberation of the Princess, the Cardinal would be unable to avail himself of the Baron's offer. At this the Baron looked hugely disappointed and allowed himself to show his vexation with some freedom. "It was a monstrous thing," he protested, "that a soldier and a gentleman having resolved upon an admirable enterprise should be thus thwarted by a malign destiny." Seeing, however, in the expression on Wogan's face that Wogan was not likely long to endure the Baron's tirades, he hastened to explain that he, of course, exonerated his visitor from any share in the discomfiture that had come to him.

When the Baron's first ebullition of irritation

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had ceased, Wogan, who had some sympathy for the man for having wished to make his attempt, suggested that the Baron might still be of service in the matter. On hearing this the Swede brightened up considerably and asked if Wogan intended to take him with him on his enterprise. Wogan explained, politely but definitely, that this was impossible; that his plan for its proper execution needed as few persons as possible, and that those persons had already been chosen. He pointed out that so long as they were in the Emperor's dominions, the fewer the number of those that took part in the adventure the less likely they were to attract observation.

The Baron's face again fell, but he recovered something of his earlier equanimity when Wogan told him that there was a way in which he proposed to make use of his services. Once he and his party had crossed the Austrian frontier and were in the dominion of the State of Venice they were theoretically in safety. The authority of the Austrian Emperor did not legally extend an inch beyond the frontier line, but as Wogan observed, the limitations of frontier lines and strict legality of action were not always observed, and it might be well to prepare for any possibility. Wogan, therefore, made to the Baron a suggestion which he had considered on his way to Trent, and resolved to broach to his potential ally if he found him at all to his liking. This was the scheme the details of which served later to allay the disquietude of Misset at the meet-

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ing in the "Blue Moon." Wogan proposed that the Baron, under pretence of forming a hunting-party, should raise a little force of armed men and keep them waiting in readiness in the neighborhood of the frontier between the States of Venice and the Austrian Empire, so that when he arrived with his precious charge he might find an armed force ready to escort and to insure her against pursuit and attempt of capture.

The Baron was patently not pleased at having to play so second-rate a part in a conspiracy of which he had hoped to be a leader. But the disappointment dwindled before the comfortable sum of money which Wogan was able to present to him, and the promise of another sum no less comfortable at the end of the enterprise. It was arranged between them, therefore, that after a given date the Baron's little army was to be on the alert day and night, ready to come to the assistance of the adventurers on the first summons. The bargain thus concluded, Wogan shared a hasty meal with the Baron at the local inn, declining for reasons of discretion to be presented to the Baron's host and share his table. The meal dispatched, he mounted his horse and rode back again as swiftly as his beast could carry him to the place whence he had come, recounted his action, and received the approval of the Cardinal. His next step was to travel to Scelestat and seek an interview that gained him the desired leaves of absence for his three friends.

VIII

THE PRISONER OF INNSPRUCK

THE news of the capture of the Princess Clementina delighted the instigators of the deed, and profoundly irritated those whom the act was meant to annoy; but it had little or no effect upon the rest of Europe. In Paris the gallants agreed cheerfully that the Emperor was no gentleman, and spoke their minds with a freedom only equalled by its security concerning the manners, customs, mistresses, and personal appearance of the Elector of Hanover. In London *The Bellman*, a daily news-sheet that attempted to rekindle the perished fires of *The Tatler* and the *Spectator*, devoted what its editor, the ingenious Mr. Grouch, believed to be a diverting essay to the subject. In this edifying skit his Majesty King James the Third appeared under the whimsical appellation of King Janus, a direct descendant of Mr. Facing-both-ways, and the daughter of the Sobieskis was delicately and gracefully nicknamed the Princess Calamity. The paper had some success in the coffee-houses, and was the direct cause of a duel between Sir Pompey Synge, M.P., who was reading it aloud at the Cocoa-Tree

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with much gusto, and young Roger Mornington (commonly called Marquess of Highbridges), who interrupted him by whistling, mightily out of tune, "The Twenty-ninth of May." The parties duly met, with the result that Sir Pompey nursed a perforated forearm for some weeks at Synge Hall, and young Highbridges took a prolonged holiday on the Continent. In Vienna nobody said anything, and in the rest of the capitals anybody said anything he pleased without appreciable result.

In his own domain Prince Sobieski, of course, protested loudly against an act that was as unjust as it was dishonorable, but Prince Sobieski was a potentate of small importance, and the Emperor of Austria was far more anxious to keep in the good graces of the reigning King of England than to satisfy the just claims of an unimportant princeling. The friends and adherents of James Stuart everywhere were mighty angry at an affront which they were powerless, if not to resent, at least to revenge. But the exiled King had no allies who might consider it worth their while to interfere actively on his behalf. It was not worth disturbing the peace of Europe because the daughter of a petty prince was restrained from marrying a man who called himself, ineffectually enough, King of England. So Sobieski stormed and the Prince's adherents grumbled to no purpose, and the Princess remained in the Tyrolese captivity, fretting her heart out, and growing, she felt convinced, daily more pas-

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sionately devoted to the monarch she had never seen.

Apart from the actual indignity of arrest and imprisonment, Princess Clementina's condition at Innsbruck was not one of special hardship or discomfort. She had the companionship of her mother; she had the society of her women; she had the services of Monsieur de Chateaudoux; she was treated with the respect due to a lady of royal birth, and except for the fact that she was not allowed to take the key of the fields, she was almost as comfortably housed as if she were at home in her familiar Ohlau. But the Princess had an eager and imperious spirit, and she would have hated as fiercely a confinement more easy or more severe. It was the being restrained that maddened her. She was young; she was impulsive; she very naturally wanted to have things her own way. She seemed to be going to freedom and exaltation when she set out upon the journey that was intended to end in making her Queen of England, and now here she was shut up in a petty dwelling in a petty town, with no prospect of liberation before her. Doubtless, if she were willing to surrender to the wishes of the Elector of Hanover as the Austrian Emperor had already surrendered to him, if she would but consent to forego the arranged alliance with the exiled Stuart, she would have gained her liberty speedily enough. Clementina would not for a moment entertain the idea of free-

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dom on such conditions. She was a daughter of warlike Sobieskis, and her proud temper resented hotly the arrogant brutality that had presumed to interfere by force with her marriage. In this determination she had the support alike of her father and her mother, who believed that in time the Emperor of Austria must, for very shame's sake, set the girl free, and who were not willing to lose the chance which had so pleasantly presented itself of seeing a kingly crown placed upon their daughter's head.

The room in the house at Innspruck in which the Princess Clementina passed her waking hours was in appearance as comfortable as if it had been one of the rooms in her father's palace. But if it had been vastly more comfortable than it was, and vastly more beautiful and vastly more luxuriously appointed, it would have seemed to the Princess more hateful than the single room of the meanest hovel in her father's estates, for it was a room in a house at Innspruck, and it meant captivity, a condition peculiarly irksome to a high-hearted young lady. Clementina had to admit to her reason that General Heister, Governor of Innspruck, performed the task which had been forced upon him by the Emperor with as much courtesy and consideration for her welfare as was consistent with the carrying out of his charge, but Clementina instinctively regarded him as no better than an ogre, and the walls which encompassed her as a miserable den.

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Clementina had consented to the marriage with the exiled King of England willingly enough. Her young imagination had been fired by romantic accounts of the valiant and unhappy gentleman who was so unfairly kept from his own, and who had so lately endeavored, sword in hand, to win back the crown of his fathers. It may have been, indeed it must have been, that the possibility of that ancestral crown again resting on the young head of the Chevalier de St. George had something of the influence upon the Princess's mind which it undoubtedly exercised upon the mind of her parents. There be few young princesses who would not choose to be a queen, and to be Queen of England would be, indeed, a very delightful dignity. But with Clementina the romance of the matter had counted for most in her decision, as far as her decision was taken into consideration, and now her willingness to become the wife of James Stuart was intensified into an eager desire by the unexpected obstacle to her marriage. To be stopped on the way to meet her lover and suitor, to be immured in a dungeon—for so she persisted in regarding her dwelling at Innspruck—and to be assured that under no conditions would she be liberated again until she had agreed to renounce the man whom she now assured herself she devotedly loved, all these things made her vehemently eager to be free and resolutely resolved not to abandon the Chevalier.

With a mind in this distraught and angry condi-

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tion, the Princess Clementina found the long, increasing days of her captivity grow more and more hateful. She was not at all jealously guarded, and she was permitted to take the air when she pleased in the gardens of her residence. She had the society of her women, and might have the society of the Governor as much as she pleased. As, however, she assured herself that she detested that worthy and harassed gentleman, she saw no more of him than the conditions made unavoidable.

On a certain evening in the bitterly wintry spring of the year 1719 the Princess Clementina was seated at her window looking out wistfully upon the prospect illuminated by the slowly setting sun. Her mother was not present, being confined to her room by an indisposition brought on by the circumstances of her captivity. Her only companions were two of her women. One of these was seated at a little harpsichord and accompanying the other, who was singing softly one of those pathetic, melancholy little Polish love-songs that are so poignantly appealing in their minor key. This was the song:

A redbird sang at my garden-gate
As jolly a song as a soul could hear
Of splendid fortune and friendly fate,
Kinder and blither from year to year;
But just as the heart of my heart was gay
The redbird flew away.

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A bluebird sang at my cottage door
A tale of love and a lover true
To woo me and win me and love me more
Year after year as the suns renew;
But just as the heart of my heart was gay
The bluebird flew away.

A blackbird sang at my window-sill
The knell of pleasure, the dirge of bliss,
The fleeting good, the abiding ill,
Woe for the world that is made amiss;
And though I was eager to drive it away,
The blackbird chose to stay.

For a while the Princess had seemed unconscious of the song and the singer, but as the song came to an end Clementina gave a little sigh and turned from her contemplation of the world outside her prison. "That is a sad song, sweet voice," she said.

The girl Sacha turned and made the Princess a respectful salutation. "Your Highness's forgiveness," she pleaded.

Clementina smiled sadly. "I do not blame you," she said. "Birds in cages should never sing merrily. They should only drone dirges for their liberty." She flung herself wearily upon the sofa and yawned.

The girl Nadia, she that had been playing the harpsichord, tried to divert her mood, and asked her, "Will your Highness play cards?"

Clementina shook her head. Sacha suggested a game of chess and met with no better acceptance.

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"What will amuse your Highness?" Nadia asked, in a voice of despair.

Clementina roused herself a little. "There is only one thing that could amuse me," she protested, "and that is my freedom."

Sacha and Nadia sighed heavily, and there was silence for an instant, a silence suddenly and sharply broken by Clementina, now roused from her apathy to the fierce sense of her wrongs.

"What a crazy world it is!" she cried, apostrophizing an indifferent ceiling. "Here is a tame and patient maid that has a mate named for her by her parents. She goes forth, obediently and quietly, to be married to the man that her masters have chosen, and an old ogre that calls himself Emperor of Austria stops my journey and shuts me up in a dungeon because, for some reason or other, he disapproves of my nuptials."

Sacha made a smiling protest. "Come, madam," she said, humorously, as she glanced round the richly furnished apartment, "this is scarcely a dungeon."

Clementina frowned reproof of her levity and spoke fiercely. "Were it walled with gold," she declared, "were it starred with jewels, it would still be a dungeon for me. I come of a race that loves liberty. I cannot breathe free in a gilded captivity." Nadia and Sacha sighed discreetly in sympathy with her passion. Nadia spoke. "Are you so much in love with King James," the girl asked, "that delay vexes you?"

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Clementina rose to her feet impatiently and began walking restlessly up and down the room while she answered. "I am in love with the open air," she cried, fiercely, "with the free sky, with the power to ride east or west, north or south, as my fancy whistles. What right have they to keep me prisoner here? If my father was a great king instead of a poor prince they would not dare this insolence!"

Nadia sighed again. "Why not do as they wish," she suggested, "and give your word not to marry James Stuart?"

"After all," Sacha suggested, supporting her friend, "you have never seen him, and a lover that one has never seen is as good or as bad as no lover at all."

The flame of Clementina's indignation increased with the vain efforts of her women to assuage it. "I have given my word to an exiled gentleman," she said, hotly. "Why should I take it back? Indeed, it is true that I have never seen him, except as one may say after looking on a picture that one has seen the original. But I know him well by hearsay, believe him, by good report, to be upright, honorable, and unhappy, restrained unjustly from his kingdom, kept unrighteously from his inheritance. Would you have me be as false to him as all the world has been, me who have freely given him my word?"

Nadia made a little grimace. "Likely your Highness is right," she said, wistfully, "but for myself I

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think I would let any man go, to get out of this dull place."

"You talk foolish," Clementina said, sharply. "There be things a man may not do—he may not break his passed word—"

"Ah, a man!" Sacha commented, with a world of meaning in her few words.

Clementina resented the comment and showed her resentment in a higher pitch of protest. "To my mind," she insisted, "a man's honor and a woman's honor are weighed in the same scales. A lie is a lie, though the lips that speak be womanly or manly. I would not deny my husband that is to be for all the wonders of the world, and if they will not release me on other terms than denial, then here I will abide till my dying-time."

Nadia shook her head and smiled a wry smile. "I am not of so valorous a composition," she asserted.

She seemed of a mind to say more, but Clementina took no notice of her words, and continued: "Yet I think it will not end so. Uplift ye, oh my heart! A girl of my line is not to be frightened; a girl of my line is full of hope. We call ourselves lucky, we Sobieskis."

"Why?" Nadia asked, ironically.

"Because of our bad luck, fool!" Clementina answered, tartly. "Could Heaven send a better reason?"

Both the Princess's women laughed loyally at their

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mistress's little witticism. A space of silence succeeded to the forced merriment. Clementina yawned and turned to the window again and looked drearily over the dreary landscape, all sodden with the snow that the beating rain was steadily turning into slush. Nadia and Sacha glanced at each other and sighed softly. Then Nadia spoke again.

"What would your Highness do," she asked, "if when, after all this pothor and turmoil and discomfort, you meet your Englishman you find that he is not to your liking?"

Clementina swung round and faced her woman angrily. "You are full of idle thoughts this day," she cried. "It is the duty of kings and queens to love each other, for the sake of their subjects."

Sacha made bold to laugh at this novel declaration of statecraft. "But how would it be," she asked, teasingly, "if your Highness should chance to meet some pretty fellow that was more to your taste than the Englishman?"

Clementina knitted her pretty brows in an effort to look Junonian, an effort unsuited to her dainty loveliness, and, therefore, unsuccessful. "Kings and queens have no such foolish feelings," she declared.

The girls tittered and seemed eager to pursue the argument, but at this moment the conversation was interrupted. A door opened and Monsieur de Chateaudoux entered.

"His Excellency the Governor," he said, "re-

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quests the honor of an interview with your Highness."

Clementina answered gravely, "I will receive his Excellency." And Chateaudoux left the room.

When he had gone Sacha turned to the Princess and questioned, "Why does your Highness consent to see this fellow?"

"Child," Clementina answered, "it were foolish to deny where one has no means to enforce denial. Let the fairness and softness of courtesy flourish between us when it comes to the question of a gaoler's message."

As she spoke the door opened again and Monsieur de Chateaudoux entered and announced, "His Excellency the Governor." Prompt upon the announcement the Governor entered. General Heister had long left his youth behind, but he was still a handsome, soldierly man, and he still carried himself with something of the alertness and alacrity of the days when he was young and gay and dangerous. But there was no show of gayety in his demeanor as he came into the presence. With grave formality he saluted the Princess, and, advancing, kissed her extended hand. Clementina had seated herself, and the Governor remained standing before her, Clementina smiling sourly, the Governor doing his best to smile sweetly. Monsieur de Chateaudoux withdrew.

"Well, Excellency," Clementina asked, "are you come to deliver me my liberty?"

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"I hope so, your Highness," Heister replied, alertly.

At the sound of these words Clementina clapped her hands joyously, as if she believed that in very truth the Governor had brought the tidings of her surrender to freedom.

"Indeed?" she cried, with alacrity. "May I pack my trunks?"

"Your Highness anticipates," the Governor said, gently. "Here is newly arrived a gentleman, an English gentleman, that has travelled all the way from Great Britain and desires permission to wait upon your Highness."

Clementina, taken unawares, looked some of the surprise she felt. "Who is this gentleman?" she asked.

General Heister explained: "Sir Timothy Wynstock, as I think, but these English names are a mouthful. He comes as a special envoy from my Lord Stanhope, Great Britain's chief minister."

"With what purpose?" Clementina asked, with a frowning face. The England of my Lord Stanhope was the England of the Elector of Hanover and not the England of King James the Third.

"I think your Highness may guess," the Governor said, significantly. "He wishes, as I take it, to persuade your Highness of the wisdom of the British crown in your regard."

Clementina felt angry, looked angry, spoke angrily. "He will have to plead more mellifluously

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than the sirens," she asserted, "to charm me into that assurance. Must I indeed see the gentleman? I promise you that it will be no more than a waste of time."

Heister replied, earnestly, "I think I must respectfully entreat your Highness to grant this audience."

Clementina looked at him ironically. "Your Excellency's entreaties are as like commands as this place is like a prison. Pray introduce the foolish gentleman."

The Governor raised his eyebrows. "Foolish gentleman?" he echoed. "Do you know him?"

"A man must needs be foolish," Clementina insisted, "who hopes to persuade a woman like me to change her mind for reasons of state." She paused, and then as if recognizing her helplessness, she added, "Oh, admit him and be done with him!"

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GENERAL HEISTER looked relieved and bowed profoundly. "I thank your Highness," he said, and quitted the room with a rapidity that fringed the skirts of informality. Indeed, the poor gentleman was somewhat to be pitied, for his guardianship was whimsical and unfamiliar; his ward was wayward, and plainly hated him; and how the whole business was to end it gravelled him to guess. Had he been in supreme command of the situation his methods would have been primitive and paternal. As it was, he could but grin and bear it, whistling or cursing as his daily humor veered.

General Heister could not admit that the captivity of the Princess Clementina was in any sense rigorous or unkind apart from the original unkindness, if such indeed it were, that kept her from her promised husband. She was lodged in a house that neighbored the Governor's own residence; she had the company of her mother and of her ladies-in-waiting, and to give to her little establishment something of the formality of a petty court she had the

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services of Monsieur de Chateaudoux, the French gentleman that had been for long her father's private secretary, to act as her prime minister, as her master of the ceremonials, and, indeed, as all the male officials of her household. She was in a sense watched, in the sense that a sentry stood before the door of her dwelling; but this might be interpreted as you chose, either as an act of vigilance or as an act of courtesy.

Indeed, there seemed to General Heister, as there would probably have seemed to any other Austrian official in his place, that there was not the faintest need of anything beyond the merest show of surveillance. How could a young woman attended only by women and one elderly gentleman seriously entertain any thought of escape from a town like Innspruck, so far within the dominion of Cæsar? General Heister himself had said, jestingly, that unless the Princess could take to herself the wings of a bird there was no chance of her leaving Innspruck until such time as the Emperor chose to relent or the girl to make submission. As the Emperor showed no signs of relenting, and the girl showed no signs of submission, General Heister got quite used to the presence of the Princess and her little court in the town where he held command, and grew less and less heedful of any possibility of the girl slipping from between his fingers.

Clementina was, therefore, willingly allowed by General Heister a great deal more liberty than she

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chose to use. So long as she kept within the limits of the town she might, if she pleased, have wandered all day about Innsbruck and admired its many beauties, chief among them, in the eyes of its inhabitants, the Golden Roof of Frederick of the Empty Pockets. But the Princess preferred to make the most of her captivity, and declined to take the air elsewhere than in the garden of the house that had been allotted to her for a residence. As this garden was a fairly large one, shut in by high, weatherworn old walls and not overlooked at all, the Princess could here enjoy herself in all privacy, and would have done so more often than she did if the spring of that year of imprisonment had been less bitter.

General Heister knew very well that the one thing which insistentlly recalled to Clementina the fact of her captivity, had she been at all minded to forget it, was the formal daily visit which he felt it his duty to pay her, a formality which he fulfilled more for the satisfaction of his official conscience than from any pleasure it afforded either to the visitor or the visited. The conversation on these occasions was almost invariably on the same lines. The General would inquire politely as to the Princess's health, and the Princess would reply politely and icily that she was as well as any young woman unjustly imprisoned could either expect or desire to be. The Governor would then probably make some remark about the weather, or offer to com-

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municate some trivial gossip from Vienna. Here the Princess would generally cut him short with the assurance that she was indifferent to any news from the court of the cruel Cæsar, but that she would be glad to have any information as to the health and well-being of her affianced husband, the King of England. To such words, spoken by the young lady with all the gravity she could command, the General would attempt to reply in a manner of heavy badinage that had the effect of still further exasperating the Princess, who would presently signify that the audience was at an end. General Heister would then respectfully take his leave, as he had now taken his leave, and occupy himself with his own business and his own pleasures for the next twenty-four hours, leaving Clementina to pass those twenty-four hours as best she might, raging against fate and furious at her own inability to right her wrongs.

The General lost no time in intrusting his English visitor to the care of Monsieur de Chateaudoux, and in doing so he considered that he had washed his hands of the Sobieski family for the day. He did not like Monsieur de Chateaudoux, and Monsieur de Chateaudoux did not like him, but they had to see a certain amount of each other in their official positions as representatives of two royalties.

Monsieur de Chateaudoux was an amiable, formal French gentleman that had lived the better part of his life abroad from his native land, but that still

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cherished tenderly the traditions of the sunlit reign. He had the soul of a majordomo; he delighted to keep a prince's house in order; he had done his best to create a miniature Versailles in the limited circumscription of Ohlau. He had succeeded to the top of his hopes, for, if he was a great deal of a pedant, he was also very little of a fool, and he did not nick the notch of his hopes too high. So long as he could chasten the asperities—for so he deemed them—of the Northern State into at least a remote harmony with the stately graces of the great days of the great reign, he was content. Indeed, he had reason for contentment. Ohlau took kindly to etiquette, to the suave manipulation of fans, to the swimming carriage of petticoats, to the peruked paganism and modish mannerism that had made the grand century so very grand.

Monsieur de Chateaudoux had been very happy in his long tranquillity of Ohlau. He had even been happy when a skittish fate had called upon him to quit these familiarities and escort a petulant, exquisite princess across Europe to wed an exiled gentleman who for some mysterious reason was called King of England, though his throne was temporarily occupied by a disagreeable German Elector. But he was not happy in Innspruck as the prisoned minister of a prisoned princess. He disliked the discomforts of captivity, the disturbance of a familiar and agreeable routine, and, because he associated General Heister with those discomforts and

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that disturbance, he disliked General Heister. Now he accompanied him reluctantly enough to the Governor's house to take charge of the English envoy that had so suddenly made his appearance, and to present him to the Princess.

When General Heister was well out of hearing the girl Nadia spoke rapidly to her mistress. "Madam," she whispered, "you vex his Excellency mightily."

Clémentina shrugged her shoulders. "Let him but set me free," she answered, tartly, "and I shall vex him no longer."

She knew that Monsieur de Chateaudoux would presently enter with this unwelcome visitor from England, so she rose and went again to the window and stood there with her back turned to the door, staring at the dreary landscape, and still stood so when the door opened and Monsieur de Chateaudoux came in, with a gentleman by his side that was clad in a sober travelling habit, and was accompanied by a youth enveloped in a huge riding-mantle.

"Your Highness," Chateaudoux said, "I have the honor to present to you the high and well-born British statesman, the Lord Sir Timothy Wynstock, who comes attended by his secretary, and who entreats the honor of a few minutes' private speech with your Highness."

The Princess barely turned her head in the direction of her minister, and gave a curt little bow

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as if to admit that she had heard what he said however unwilling she might be to hear it. Chateaudoux threw a semi-apologetic glance at his companion, a glance which aimed at suggesting that much as he, Chateaudoux, detested the Englishman's mission he was in honesty compelled to admit that women were difficult creatures to manage. He then withdrew, leaving the stranger in possession of the field. At a whispered order from Clementina, her women quitted the room to go to the apartment of the Princess Sobieski, and the Princess and the new-comers were left alone. The youth that accompanied Wogan, in obedience to a word from him, withdrew to the farthest part of the room and waited there.

X

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FOR some few seconds silence reigned in the room, a silence at last broken by Clementina, who, still looking steadfastly out of the window at the raining sky and the snowy earth, asked a question of her visitor. "Well, sir," she asked, "what have you to say to me?"

"Much," the stranger answered, "and short time to say it in."

At the sound of the stranger's voice Clementina swung sharply round from the window and stared at him. It is the duty of royal persons to recall voices; it is the duty of royal persons to remember faces. She knew that she had heard the voice before, and when she turned she knew that she had seen the face before. In the person of the pretended English envoy she recognized to her astonishment the Chevalier Charles Wogan, with whom she had spoken once for a few minutes at Ohlau.

"You!" she cried, incredulous.

"Even I," Wogan answered. "To the good Governor yonder I am Sir Timothy Wynstock, British envoy from my Lord Stanhope to your

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Highness, and hereafter to the Emperor of Austria; but to your Highness I am no better and no worse than Charles Wogan."

In the eyes of both lights were shining; in the ears of both sounds were stirring that were not the lights and sounds of the room in the Innsbruck villa. The lights were the big wax candles in the sconces of the great hall at Ohlau; the sounds were made by the bows of the fiddles scraping on the strings of the fiddles up in the gallery, where the musicians were making ready for the dance that was about to begin. The room was all vivid with the color of coats and gowns, with the glitter of stars and diadems; the room was all tingling with insistent voices and the thrill of troubled violins. And in the midst of all the noise and glow a laughing girl, hanging on the arm of a partner for the coming dance—name of him now irrevocably forgotten—is stayed on her way through the crowd by the master of the house—that is, the Prince, her father, and that should, if the world were a better world, be a king. The Prince, her father, presents to her a stranger with an outlandish name, a gentleman with a comely, quiet face and bright, smiling eyes; a gentleman that speaks French very readily and dexterously with a little, soft, provocative accent unknown to her before. The Princess Clementina exchanges a few words with the Chevalier Charles Wogan and sweeps onward to her dance. The dance-music is ringing all round

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the room now as they meet again, for the second time. For a moment both stand very still and silent. Then the girl breaks the silence.

"What does it all mean?" Clementina cried, in amaze. "Is there no English envoy?"

"Oh yes," Wogan answered, "there is an English envoy now sleeping dully or waking dully in Strasbourgh. I masquerade in his raiment; I carry his papers; I hoodwink simpletons like the Governor of Innspruck."

"What does it all mean?" Clementina cried again.

"It means, your Highness," Wogan answered, with a grave joy in his voice, "that I am come to set you free."

Clementina gave a little scream of delight, doubt, wonder.

"To set me free?" she gasped. "Truly?"

"Truly," Wogan replied. "I am the bearer to your Highness of two means of escape from your present detestable captivity."

"Two means of escape?" Clementina repeated, eagerly. "One is enough for me."

"Your Highness shall judge," Wogan said, calmly. "In the first place, I am commanded by my royal master, King James the Third, to assure your Highness of the grief he feels at your Highness's detention, and at the thought that your tribulations are due to him. He bids me, therefore, to assure you that if you at all desire to be released from your promise to him he, at whatever cost to him-

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self, is ready to release you. This would set you free at once."

Clementina spoke swiftly: "But this we need not consider if his Majesty is still of the mind in which, through you, he wooed me."

Wogan answered emphatically. "His Majesty is ever your Highness's adoring suitor."

"Though he has never seen me," Clementina said, smiling.

"He has seen your picture," Wogan asserted.

Clementina made a face. "A miniature may lie like a money-lender," she protested.

"I was at hand," Wogan suggested, "to back its veracity."

Clementina laughed blithely. "Why," she cried, "you did not see me above a minute or so."

"A minute," Wogan answered, gravely, "is time enough in which to see your Highness, and to see for a minute is to remember forever."

Clementina laughed again. "I have heard that you gentlemen of Ireland are very ready of speech," she said. "If my Lord loves me on the faith of your phrases your tongue must be a prodigal. Could you love a lady so?"

"If I were another," Wogan said, earnestly, "and heard Charles Wogan say that a lady were fair beyond praise and lovable beyond thought I should believe him."

"Indeed!" Clementina commented, and looked many questions.

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"Indeed," Wogan answered, seriously; then questioned, "What does your Highness say to my first way of escape?"

Clementina answered emphatically: "I will say to you what I said to my women but now, that I will wither here to antiquity before I go back of my given word."

Wogan looked pleased at her vehemence. "I expected as much from your Highness," he declared, "but my orders were my orders."

"What is your second way?" Clementina asked. "I hope it is better than the first."

"Much better," Wogan assured her. "If your Highness do but consent I will carry you hence in my company."

"Has the British envoy so much power in his passport?" Clementina questioned.

"Truly, no," Wogan admitted. "If your Highness come with me it must be by stealth. Duplicity and intrigue are my cards in the game I play for your Highness's liberation. All my plans are laid for your escape, but I must warn your Highness that it is a mighty ticklish adventure."

"Tell me what I am to do and I will do it," Clementina asserted, confidently.

Wogan began his explanation. "First of all," he said, "let me begin where I ought to have begun at the start, and that same place should be the beginning, though it is never our Irish way to be so formal and so nice. But it is not too late to hark

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back and deliver my credentials, which is the first duty of an envoy of any kind all the world over."

Clementina smiled confidently at him. "Your credentials?" she echoed. "The Chevalier Wogan needs no credentials to me when he comes from my King."

Wogan laughed. "It was not of his Majesty—God bless him!—that I was thinking at all," he declared. "It was of the worthy gentleman, your father, I spoke, and I was wishful to prove that he was aware of what I was after, and that he gave his princely consent to that same. Sure I couldn't do what I want to do, anyhow, if your amiable parent did not approve of my enterprise and did not give his consent to my attempting it. But he does and he has, Heaven reward him, and here is the proof that it is God's holy truth I am talking."

As he spoke Wogan fumbled for a moment in his breast-pocket and then produced a packet, which he handed to the Princess.

Clementina opened it and found a letter from her father, formally ordering her to follow the advice of the Chevalier Wogan, who had a plan for liberating her which met with his entire approval. Clementina read rapidly, then questioned, "What is your plan?"

"You must hear my tale something in the rough," Wogan answered, "since time presses, and take much for granted. I and three gentlemen of my

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acquaintance are going to carry you hence, to carry you to Rome and my royal master."

"You and three gentlemen of your acquaintance?" Clementina repeated, bewildered. "You talk like the ancient heroes. How are you and your three friends to get me out of Innspruck?"

"Very easily," Wogan insisted. "You are not guarded by dragons, or if you are, they are drowsy dragons and sleep secure of their prey. At the inn of the 'Black Eagle' by the West Gate my coach waits; at the same inn are my three friends that are to be your escort, and with them is the wife of one of them, that means to be your lady-in-waiting on the adventure."

"Who be these three brave gentlemen," Clementina asked, "that are so ready to serve me?"

"Their names are unknown to your Highness," Wogan answered. "But I will deliver them to you, for they are worth the remembering. They are Major Richard Gaydon, Captain John Misset, and Captain Luke O'Toole. They are all Irishmen in the service of France, and they serve France because France has been the friend to King James, and will be again, please Heaven."

Clementina looked at Wogan with admiring, delighted eyes. "You are a very wonderful gentleman," she cried, "and you seem to have some very wonderful friends. I cannot think what I have done to deserve such devotion."

Wogan made her a courtly bow, but his voice was

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very earnest as he answered her: "You have been pleased to exist, Highness, and to add to the grace and glory of the world, and there never was Irishman yet, worthy to be called Irish, that would not do his all in the cause of beauty."

Clementina laughed gayly at the extravagance of his speech. "I think you must have already released me," she vowed. "Surely this is not my prison of Innspruck, but the gardens of Armida, and you some valorous Orlando."

"Alas! Highness," Wogan answered, "I am no such matter, nor is your Highness, indeed, yet at liberty; so the sooner we set to work to that end the better."

Clementina nodded and looked wise. "How is it to be done?" she asked.

Wogan answered a question with a question: "You are not, I take it, very closely guarded?"

"Lord, no!" Clementina cried. "They think that unless I had wings there is no way for me to fly out of Innspruck."

"Please God, we shall show them their error," Wogan said, significantly. "Now is there any unwatched way by which your Highness could gain the open?"

"Surely," Clementina answered. "Yonder door leads to a quiet garden with an ancient gate. I could have got out so a hundred times, but to what purpose?"

"None, indeed, then," Wogan said, emphatically.

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"Much now. For this enterprise, Highness, if I have enlisted one woman to serve you, I have enlisted another to take your place here for a while."

He turned as he spoke to the youth that waited apart, and called to him to come forward. In obedience to his summons the youth advanced to the centre of the room and paused there in sullen silence. "Permit me," Wogan said to the Princess, "to present to your Highness my secretary, Mistress Jane Gordon."

Clementina gave a little cry of surprise. "A woman!" she said, and as if in answer to her surprise Wogan lifted the heavy cavalier's hat from the new-comer's head and revealed the handsome, angry face of Jane. He plucked away her riding-cloak and showed that she was habited like a man beneath it.

"A woman, your Highness," Wogan said, as he flung the cloak over a chair, "that has done this for love of you."

The girl turned sharply to Wogan and said, in a low voice that only reached his ears, "For love of you, Charles Wogan."

Wogan looked at her in dismayed reproof. "Hush, hush!" he said, softly; "remember your vow to act pretty." Then indicating the Princess with a gesture, he continued, "Mistress Gordon, her Highness permits you to kiss her hand."

"I do not want to," Jane responded, still in the same low voice.

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Clementina, who took the girl's reluctance for embarrassment, addressed her kindly. "Child," she asked, "are you really running this risk for my sake?"

Jane gave a jerk of her head in the direction of Wogan. "You have heard him say so," she said, and said no more.

Wogan sidled up to her and spoke swiftly, entreatingly. "Now, for God's sake, Jane, be amiable," he implored. He addressed the Princess: "If your Highness could allow this brave young lady to rid herself of a garb that sadly muffles her comeliness, and to shift into some gown and coats of yours, we shall be ready for the next move in the game."

"That is easy enough," Clementina answered. "Go into this room, child; it is my bedchamber. In the wardrobe you will find a dress very like this; use it, with whatever else you may need."

Jane made a little unwilling curtsy which contrasted comically indeed with her male attire and her heavy riding-boots. "I thank your Highness," she said.

Wogan whispered in her ear, "And for the love of Heaven be brisk!"

She answered him half frowning, half smiling: "I will be brisk for the love of—" She paused for a moment, and added, "Heaven."

Then, in obedience to the gesture of the Princess, she passed into the next room and closed the door

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behind her. Clementina turned to Wogan. "What is your purpose now?" she asked.

"The dusk will soon be darkness," Wogan answered. "I will take my leave. I have declined all the Governor's offers of hospitality on the ground of fatigue. I have told him that I have chosen to lodge at the 'Black Eagle,' which is not the fashionable resort of the town, because I wish to start betimes on my journey to Vienna to-morrow, after I have assured myself of your Highness's safety. The proverbial madness of Englishmen abroad justifies any and every eccentricity. You will slip away under cover of the darkness to the alley that leads to the bridge. There I will meet you and conduct you to where my coach waits and my friends. This girl that is to be your substitute will take your place in your bed, will feign headache and refuse all company save her women, to whom, when they join her, she will tell her tale. Are your Highness's women to be trusted?"

"Quite," Clementina answered.

"That is well," Wogan said, cheerfully, "and all is well."

At this moment the Princess broke out into a pretty ripple of insistent laughter that Wogan, for all that he was ignorant of the cause of the girl's hilarity, was obliged to join in and grin. But if he permitted his face to pucker with mirth, his eyes questioned, and Clementina seeing the challenge answered it.

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"I am laughing," she said, "to think of all the things that we are forgetting in our anxiety to be off."

Wogan shook his head gently, as if to insinuate that he could not admit that he was forgetting anything. But the girl was not to be balked of her cause for laughter.

"First of all," she insisted, "we are forgetting my mother, who is so vexed and fretted that she has taken to her bed. Have you forgotten my mother, Monsieur the Chevalier?"

Again Wogan shook his head. "I had not forgotten my lady, your mother," he protested. "I have even in my possession a letter from your father to your lady mother, entreating her, as he has entreated you, to follow my counsels in this business." As he said this he produced the letter of which he spoke, and delivered it to Clementina. "But if," he continued, "your Highness will be advised by me, she will waste no time in seeking an interview that can only be distressing to her and to you, but will consent instead to leave a letter explaining the reason of your disappearance."

Clementina laughed again. "Let my mother," she said, "be kept in ignorance if you will, but I am mightily afraid that you will have to tell all to Monsieur de Chateaudoux."

Wogan met Clementina's mirth with companionable laughter. It pleased him to find her so buoyant, but behind his sympathetic merriment he was

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conscious of a strong reluctance to tell all to Monsieur de Chateaudoux.

"Is Monsieur de Chateaudoux," he asked, "the somewhat solemn gentleman who introduced me to your gracious presence?"

"The same," Clementina replied. "Indeed, he is all my household on the male side. He is my prime minister, my majordomo, my factotum. I suppose he would be my executioner if I had the power to execute any one, and if I had I would make him execute General Heister. Alas! I have no such power."

She sighed so prettily and pulled so long a face that Wogan sighed and looked grave. "Yes," continued the Princess, with the air of one that sums up a long and logical series of arguments, "I fear that we must confide in Monsieur de Chateaudoux."

Wogan was amused, but unconvinced. "May I ask your Highness why so?" he questioned. "The fewer that are in our secret—"

He got no further. Clementina was too quick to permit him to finish. "Very true," she said, "so long as you can keep them out of it, but I am afraid that you cannot keep Monsieur de Chateaudoux out of our secret."

"May I ask why not?" Wogan persisted, and he smiled as he spoke. He was finding the Princess very delightful, and though he had but the memory of the one brief meeting behind him, he felt already as if he and she were old friends. She was wilful;

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she was imperious; she was whimsical; but above all she was victoriously charming. Somehow the discovery—or perhaps the re-discovery—brought a queer sense of something like sadness with it which for the moment he could not understand.

“In the first place,” Clementina responded, with a gracious gravity, “because, if the dear, good personage learned that I had taken to my bed he would be certain to want to send for a doctor or to see me—he trifles a little with physic himself—and then Heaven knows what would happen, for he is as fussy as a dear old woman, the excellent Monsieur de Chateaudoux. But there is a more important reason even than that. You came in here with a young gentleman, your secretary. You go out alone.”

“I explained to General Heister,” Wogan answered, “that I was leaving my secretary here to keep watch upon Monsieur de Chateaudoux, whom I suspected of endeavoring to correspond with foreign powers.”

“Very true,” Clementina agreed, “but you have not told Monsieur de Chateaudoux as much, and as to him you are at present the British envoy, he would think it very droll indeed if you were to take your departure and leave the young gentleman, your secretary, behind you. Really, I think we must admit Monsieur de Chateaudoux into our confidence.”

“Your Highness is entirely right,” Wogan ad-

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mitted, surrendering as the wise man does when he sees that surrender is judicious. "I am not sure that Heaven ever intended me for a play-actor, for I find it hard to remember all the time that I am the beef-eater, Sir Timothy Wynstock, and that others accept me for that same. Let us have in the good Chateaudoux by all means. Is the excellent gentleman in the antechamber?"

"He is always there," Clementina answered. "He is very full of a sense of his own importance as the only male being in my droll little establishment, and he sits there for hours together, busily engaged in writing a history of my captivity whenever he is not occupied in drawing up elaborate protests against that captivity addressed to all the crowned heads of Europe, protests which, of course, never get beyond the hands of General Heister."

Wogan went to the door and, opening it, looked into the antechamber. There, at a large table littered with papers, Monsieur de Chateaudoux sat busily writing. Wogan addressed him, and at the sound of his voice Chateaudoux lifted his absorbed face from his papers and looked round.

"Monsieur de Chateaudoux," Wogan said, very politely, "her Highness desires speech with you."

Chateaudoux sighed. He was in the middle of a thrilling appeal to civilization against the tyranny of Cæsar. But a request from Clementina was a command, even if it came through the lips of an emissary of the Elector of Hanover. So he pushed

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his papers aside, put down his pen, quitted the table, and came into the presence. Wogan carefully closed the door after him. Monsieur de Chateaudoux stood for a moment perplexed and expectant, staring at the Princess, who suddenly burst into a fit of laughter at the gravity of his countenance.

"My good friend," she said, when she had done laughing, "do you know who this gentleman is?" She pointed at Wogan as she spoke, and Monsieur de Chateaudoux, following her gesture, looked at Wogan with cold courtesy.

"If I remember the name aright," he answered, "the gentleman is Sir Timothy Wynstock, Envoy Extraordinary from Great Britain."

"He is nothing of the kind!" cried Clementina, delightedly. "Monsieur de Chateaudoux, let me present to you my very loyal friend, the Chevalier Charles Wogan, the trusted subject of my affianced lord, King James."

Now it so happened that Monsieur de Chateaudoux had not seen Wogan during Wogan's early visit to Ohlau, because the Frenchman was confined to his apartment with a slight visitation of gout. So there was no recognition in the amazed stare with which he now favored Wogan.

"Her Highness gives me my true name and my true character," Wogan explained. "These papers will assure you of the validity of my mission."

As he spoke he handed to Chateaudoux the letters from James Sobieski, which the Frenchman read

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with an air of profound astonishment. But if he was amazed by the sudden transformation of an enemy into a friend, greater amazement was in store for him when Wogan briefly unfolded his plan for the Princess's immediate escape. In a moment the punctilious, formal official was up in arms against the eccentricity and the perils of the enterprise.

"Your Highness, Chevalier," he protested, looking at each in turn, "what you propose is no more than madness. Consider the inclemency of the weather. How is a delicately nurtured female like her Highness to venture abroad on such a night? Why, she would be like to die of exposure before this madcap journey were well begun."

Wogan was of a mind to answer the objector something hotly, but Clementina gave him a glance that asked for patience. Then she addressed Monsieur de Chateaudoux, and the tone of her voice was tender, coaxing, appealing, the tone of voice that a winsome, petted child would wisely use when it wished to cajole some favor out of a well-loved nurse that resisted compliance merely for the pleasure of being persuaded to yield. Wogan, listening to her, felt suddenly convinced that the man could not exist who could be obdurate to the appeal of that enchanting voice, to the command of those enchanting eyes.

"My dear, good Chateaudoux," she pleaded, "do you not know how I long to get away from this

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horrid place? I am sure that you do and that you will never be the person to put obstacles in the way of my escape."

Chateaudoux was plainly influenced by the manner of the Princess, but for form's sake he held out and repeated his arguments about the inclemency of the weather and the inadvisability of a young woman going abroad on such a night.

"My dear old friend," Clementina continued, "you are really unreasonable. I am neither sugar nor salt that I must needs melt with a little wetting."

Monsieur de Chateaudoux was not entirely placated. He shook his head querulously, and, turning to Wogan, addressed him in a voice that was at once plaintive and peevish. "Cannot you," he asked, "postpone this questionable experiment at least for another evening or two, when the terrible severity of the present weather shall have had the opportunity to abate? Surely there is no such desperate hurry."

Wogan restrained heroically his itching desire to take the pedantic gentleman by the two shoulders and give him a good shaking. It was in a voice that was tuned to the most admirable politeness that he answered Chateaudoux.

"Unfortunately," he declared, "there is hurry and very desperate hurry indeed. I have come here under conditions which commend me to the confidence of the Governor and allow her Highness and myself to take immediate action wholly unsuspected. The delay of a day would mean inevitable

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detection, and the ruin of all our hopes. If you make objections now and venture to disobey the commands of the Prince, your master, you take upon yourself a tremendous responsibility and act very criminally toward her Highness and my royal master."

Chateaudoux's obstinacy appeared to be something staggered by the earnestness of Wogan. But before he could say anything in reply to Wogan's vehement words the Princess spoke, this time very quietly and firmly and decisively.

"Monsieur de Chateaudoux," she said, "will make no objections and take no responsibility. Monsieur de Chateaudoux is my friend, but he is also my servant, and he will understand that I expect to be obeyed when I order him to put no obstacle in the way of my following out the wishes of my father."

She paused for a moment, and then added some softer words in a softer voice, as she saw the expression of pain at her reprimand on the face of Chateaudoux. "Come, sir, you should rejoice to find that my father's daughter has friends that are ready to help her to her heart's desire."

As she spoke she extended her hand graciously, and Chateaudoux caught it and kissed it reverently, kneeling on one knee as he did so. At a gesture from Clementina he rose again and stood waiting upon her further words.

"This gentleman," Clementina said, indicating

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Wogan, "has rallied some good and gallant soldiers like himself to carry me to liberty and my King. By virtue of my father's order he is in command here. Chevalier, will you be so good as to tell Monsieur de Chateaudoux what you wish him to do?"

Wogan explained to Chateaudoux that he desired him to act for this evening as he had acted for all the earlier evenings of the Princess's captivity; to be busy at his writing-table in the antechamber, and to answer any inquiries concerning the Princess, if any inquiries were made, with the announcement that her Highness, feeling herself indisposed, had retired to her bed for the night. To this Chateaudoux agreed docilely enough, and in obedience to a gesture of dismissal from Clementina he quitted the room. But not for long.

XI

THUNDER FROM A CLEAR SKY

WHILE Wogan was giving his final instructions to the Princess he was hugging himself with satisfaction at the thought that the business was going so briskly and so smoothly. All of a sudden came thunder out of a clear sky and shattered his satisfaction.

The door opened and Monsieur de Chateaudoux, that had left them but a few minutes before, entered with trembling gestures and a face that boded despair.

"All is lost!" he stammered. "I have this instant received a message from his Excellency General Heister in which he desires me to inform your Highness that his Highness the Prince of Niemen has just arrived in Innsbruck, and requests the honor of an immediate audience with your Highness."

As he spoke the poor gentleman was so overcome by his emotions that he almost suffered himself to sink into a chair. Happily, however, his sense of etiquette was even stronger than his sense of peril. He was glad to remember later that even in that

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moment of crisis he had the propriety to remain standing in the presence of the Princess, in spite of the disagreeable and insistent feeling of giving at the knees that tempted him to abjection.

"The Prince of Niemen!" Wogan ejaculated in a voice that all his self-command could not prevent from betraying astonishment and alarm. Instantly he recovered his equanimity. Clementina, looking from Chateaudoux, that was the picture of panic, to Wogan, saw resolution in his face and was comforted.

"All is not lost!" Wogan cried swiftly to Clementina. "Monsieur de Chateaudoux has every reason to be disturbed, but he overrates the danger." He turned to Chateaudoux and questioned, "Does the Prince of Niemen know that I am here?"

Chateaudoux made a desperate effort to pull himself together. "The Prince of Niemen knows," he said, "that the British envoy, Sir Timothy Wynstock, is here. General Heister acquainted him, it seems, with that fact, and it appears that his Highness expressed great joy at the prospect of renewing his acquaintance with a most agreeable Englishman."

As he spoke Monsieur de Chateaudoux sighed heavily and clasped and unclasped his fingers nervously. He was too dismayed to observe that Wogan did not seem to be terror-struck at the prospect of facing the Prince of Niemen. But Wogan's words now served to reassure him.

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"The Prince of Niemen," he said, "has met me already; the Prince believes me to be, not Charles Wogan, but the English envoy, Sir Timothy Wynstock. There is no time to explain this now, but I assure you that it will be quite safe for me to meet him here. Pray instruct General Heister's messenger to assure the Prince of Niemen that her Highness will be delighted to receive him immediately, and that Sir Timothy Wynstock is eager to renew acquaintanceship with his Highness. Away, man! Let me have but five minutes before the Prince arrives and all will be well."

The perplexed Chateaudoux, shuttlecock of astounding emotions, glanced at Clementina, and, reading in her face approval of what Wogan said, made as formal a reverence as the state of his nerves could permit, and quitted the room. Instantly Wogan addressed Clementina.

"I thought," he said, "that I had put this fellow of Niemen out of my path for the time. How he got here puzzles me, but there is no time for explanation or speculation. His coming does not disturb my plans at all; it only makes hurry more essential than ever. Your Highness must be off at once."

Clementina stared amazed. "Then who will receive the Prince?" she asked.

"Your double," Wogan answered. "Your Highness must forgive my lack of ceremony."

He went hurriedly, as he spoke, to the door of

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the bedchamber, and tapped sharply on it. "Jane, Jane, are you ready?" he cried.

From inside came Jane's impatient answer: "In a minute. I'm hooking myself up."

"Never mind the hooks," Wogan commanded. "Come here this instant!"

In obedience to his imperative summons, Jane entered the room, somewhat dishevelled and hurriedly completing her toilet as she walked.

"What is the matter?" she asked. "It takes time to change from the foolish things you men wear—"

Wogan interrupted her and uttered a protest. "Hush!" he said. "We are faced by an unexpected peril. The Prince of Niemen, whom I believed to be leagues away, has suddenly arrived and desires to see her Highness. Now, you must take her Highness's place."

"Sure the man will know me!" Jane cried, with a great look of alarm.

"No," Wogan asserted, reassuringly, "his Highness has never seen the Princess."

"Never," Clementina confirmed.

Jane continued to protest. "But there are pictures, miniatures," she insisted, and again Wogan interrupted her.

"Don't argue, Janel!" he ordered. "You are fair, like her Highness; blue-eyed, like her Highness; you are clad in her Highness's clothes; in this light you will pass well enough."

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"Well enough, indeed!" Jane muttered, indignantly, but no one heeded her.

Clementina questioned Wogan: "Sir, are we not asking too much of this lady?"

"Madame, I think not," Wogan answered. "The girl is a brave girl, and will keep her word and do as she is told, will you not, Jane?"

"Yes, Charles Wogan," the girl answered curtly.

Indifferent to her abruptness, Wogan continued his instructions. "You will sit here so," he explained, "with your back to the door and affect to be in a tantrum. You are to be coy to the Prince and hostile to me."

"As you please," Jane said, as she obeyed Wogan's directions.

Clementina questioned, "And I?"

"You, Madame," Wogan answered, "will you please go by the way you spoke of and wait in the alley? I will join you there swiftly. Put a warm cloak about you, for God's love, but also, for God's love, be swift and brisk."

Clementina looked at Wogan with a bright smile. "You shall find me both in this need," she answered, confidently. She went swiftly to the table, as she spoke, and very rapidly wrote a few lines on a sheet of paper, which she sealed and handed to Jane, telling her to give it up to be delivered to her mother as soon as her women came about her. With Wogan's aid she flung the heavy riding-cloak about her and drew the capote over her head.

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When she had done this she suddenly seemed to remember something, for she ran into the bedroom, caught up a case that was lying on her dressing-table, and, concealing it under the cloak, came forth again.

"I am ready," she said, simply. She held out her hand, and Wogan kissed it reverentially.

"Remember," he murmured, "the alley that leads to the bridge. I will be there as soon as I get rid of this intrusive Prince."

Clementina smiled upon him, and in another moment she had quitted the room by the door that conducted to the garden.

XII

THE SHAM PRINCESS

JANE turned to Wogan with a frowning face. "You are making me play a pretty game, Charles Wogan," she said, reproachfully.

Wogan shook his head in reproof of her petulance. "It is a great game," he declared, "and you ought to be glad to be called upon to play so great a part in it. You will be remembered with honor, I promise you, so long as brave deeds are remembered."

Jane shrugged her shoulders and made a disdainful face, but she was not displeased at the praise of her heroism, and she was attracted by her own appearance in the rich habiliments of the Princess. She peacocked before a mirror, minced, and ambled across the room, and asked Wogan if she did not look for all the world like a real princess. Wogan had just assured her warmly that she seemed indeed to be born to the purple, when his ear caught the sound of footsteps approaching. Instantly he got Jane into a position of disdain at the window and stood mournfully regarding her, when the door of the antechamber opened, and Monsieur de Chateaudoux came into the apartment with the Prince

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of Niemen at his side. Chateaudoux announced his companion and immediately withdrew.

Niemen advanced with the arrogance of carriage familiar to him. Though he had been riding hard he showed no signs of fatigue. He addressed a profound salutation to the lady in the window, whom he took to be the Princess, and then turned to Wogan, who came forward and met the Prince with extended hands and a well-feigned air of astonished greeting.

"Your Serene Highness is very welcome," he cried. "I had begun to marvel at your delay."

Niemen's unpleasing face looked less pleasing than ever to Wogan as he watched it, but he was glad to read there no distrust of the English envoy.

"You will marvel more, Sir Wynstock," the Prince said, "when you learn its cause." As he spoke he glanced toward where Jane was sitting apart with averted head, and began, "Her Highness—"

Wogan interrupted him, whispering into his ear: "Her Highness is not in the best of tempers. I have talked to her like a father, but she makes a most undutiful daughter." He quitted the Prince and, moving a little away toward Jane, spoke in a louder voice. "Your Highness, here is the Prince of Niemen come to pay his respects."

Jane answered sourly over her shoulder. "I don't want his respects, and I don't want him."

Wogan affected an air of pained agitation. "Dear, dear," he said, confidentially to the Prince, "this is very distressing." He turned from Niemen and

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again addressed the feigned Princess. "Let me entreat you to be reasonable, sweet Princess," he pleaded.

"Do not dare to call me sweet Princess!" Jane answered, peremptorily. "You know very well that I am reasonable."

Wogan again confided his cares to Niemen. "Her Highness is wofully wayward," he complained. "We have been on these terms this half-hour. I am heartily glad you have come. Maybe you can manage her."

Thus urged, Niemen, who had every confidence in his powers of placating womankind of any age or rank, advanced a little nearer to where Jane sat and began to address her in a smooth, wooing voice. "I hope," he said, "your Highness will forgive my ardor, my assiduity—"

He got no farther, for Jane promptly interrupted him. "I will do nothing of the kind," she said, emphatically, and the sharp aggressiveness of her speech and manner staggered even the self-complacency of the Prince of Niemen.

Wogan was again the confidential interpreter. "Her Highness is fretful," he whispered. "I think she is vexed at your tardy coming." He raised his voice a little for the benefit of the sham Princess. "Perhaps," he suggested, "if your Highness were to narrate the cause of your delay—"

The idea seemed to please Niemen. "Indeed," he said, with alacrity, airing his snuff-box, "I think

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her Highness may not find my narrative unworthy of attention." He offered his box to Wogan, who took a refreshing pinch. "It is for all the world like a fairy tale," he asserted. He took a pinch and continued: "Your Highness must know that I had an appointment at Strasbourgh with my lord Sir Wynstock."

"A pretty pair!" Jane grunted.

"I beg your pardon," Niemen said, not catching the meaning of her words, but realizing and resenting their manner.

Wogan went hurriedly to Jane's side, affected to exchange some whispered words with her, and then returned to Niemen. "Her Highness," Wogan explained, deftly, "expresses her interest. Pray continue."

"I met Milord as arranged," the mollified Niemen continued, indicating Wogan, who bowed profoundly. "We had a most satisfactory interview, and parted on the understanding that we were to meet at the bridge in an hour's time."

"I kept tryst," Wogan, interpolating, assured him. "I waited a weary while, and then, thinking you had changed your mind, rode on my way. What in fortune's name delayed you?"

"It was some trick of those damned Jacobites to put me out of the way," Niemen explained. "But I've baffled the rascals."

"What happened to your Highness?" Wogan asked, with an eagerness that was by no means

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feigned. "Do you not see that the Princess is well-nigh fainting with anxiety?"

Jane snapped at him. "Please speak for yourself!" she cried, tartly.

But Niemen was now embarked upon his narrative, and not to be dissuaded from persisting by a sour look or so. "As I was meditating over my wine," he said, "and drinking to your Highness's loveliness, I was suddenly affronted by a drunken ruffian, who would not rest until he had picked a quarrel with me. I was for declining his challenge, seeing his condition and being ignorant of his breeding, but a couple of gentlemen who happened to witness our altercation assured me that the fellow was a gentleman, and that I should not derogate in crossing swords with him."

"Very affable and valiant," Wogan commented.

Niemen nodded agreement and went on: "The two gentlemen agreed to act as our seconds, and we repaired to a pleasant meadow outside the town. But on the way I noticed that my antagonist's drunkenness began very conspicuously to dissipate."

"Damn the fool!" Wogan cried, involuntarily.

The Prince turned to him. "I beg your pardon," he said.

"I said the damned rascal," Wogan explained, hastily.

"Ah, you begin to see through the plot," Niemen cried. "So did I, and my suspicions were confirmed when I saw my adversary exchange a wink with one

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of those two gentlemen that were so ready to act for us."

Wogan clenched his fists. "Oh, the idiot!" he muttered, under his breath.

Niemen did not observe his irritation, and went on with his recital. "Well, lady, I am a pretty good swordsman, but I am yet better a strategist. I saw that these fellows were set on to make away with me, so I resolved to foil them, and I did."

The Prince paused for a moment and Wogan, scarcely able to restrain his impatience, spurred him eagerly to resume. "Well, well, what then?" he cried, with the liveliest show of interest.

The Prince, thus encouraged, continued his narrative. "On my way," he said, with a cunning smile, "whenever I met any personage of carriage and distinction, or any citizen of quality, I stopped him, gave him my name and rank and my immediate business, and asked him for his company at our pleasant encounter. Thus we were quite a little crowd of curious when we came to our battleground."

Wogan eyed the Prince with a look of feigned admiration. "You did very well," he applauded.

Niemen smiled complacently. "Excellently," he said. "I secured an impartial audience. We had a fine field and no favor. My bully that meant to murder me came ramping at me like a dragon, but I, with one of my Italianate tricks, pricked his sword out of his fingers before we had wasted a twelfth

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part of the world's hours. There was my bully at my mercy, but I had a mind to be kind and gave him back his blade, with a bow. The others that were in the plot would have pursued the quarrel, but I, in my calm refusal, had the sympathy of the company. So the rascal assassins were out-tricked, and I came away with the honors, the laurels, and a smooth skin. Only I was late for my appointment."

Here the Prince bowed to Wogan, who smiled as cheerfully as he could. "Well, better late than never," he said, masquerading his anger as satisfaction. Then approaching the Prince he drew him a little on one side and whispered in his ear.

"I am afraid," he said, "her Highness is in a detestable humor. It would really be better to leave her with me for a time while I reason with her."

Now the Prince, who prided himself on his skill as a lady-killer, was by no means unwilling to leave the presence of a lady so aggressively hostile as the Princess was patently proving herself to be. So he jumped at the offer.

"By all means," he said, briskly. "His Excellency the Governor has invited me to sup with him. Will you be of the party?"

Wogan shook his head gloomily. "I am afraid not," he answered. "I am unhappily of a delicate composition and cannot abide late hours; moreover, all this excitement has exhausted me."

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"I am indeed grieved," Niemen professed politely, with politeness that meant nothing.

Wogan persisted in explaining. "I have taken my lodgings at an inn on the fringe of the town," he said, "as I have to resume my travels betimes in the morning. His Excellency wished me to accept the hospitality of his roof, but I thought it better for an envoy to lie apart, so I stuck to my hostlery. My present plan is to get to bed as soon as possible and sleep off my fatigue. Will you make my excuses to the Governor and say that I shall wait upon him early to-morrow morning?"

Niemen nodded agreement. "Certainly," he said. In his inwards he was thinking that he and Heister would get on better without the phlegmatic Briton. He turned to the girl, who still sat with averted head, and made her a florid salutation. "Your Highness," he said, ceremoniously, "I take my respectful leave."

Jane's only answer to this courtesy was a very audible, "Thank Heaven!" which Wogan managed successfully to drown with an improvised fit of coughing.

He addressed the Prince apologetically. "You see," he said, with a note of pensive melancholy in his voice, "her Highness is a little difficult to manage. I shall bring her round, believe me. Wait till to-morrow, till to-morrow, my dear Prince."

Niemen saluted him. "Till to-morrow, my dear Sir Wynstock," he said, and with another reverence

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to the sham Princess he quitted the apartment. He found Chateaudoux waiting for him inwardly perturbed, but outwardly as composed as he could manage to look, and Chateaudoux brought him to the wintry street where his carriage waited, and bowed him off the premises very ceremoniously. Neither of the men said anything to the other of Niemen's mission. Their only speech was of the weather and the latest court news of Paris and Vienna. So they parted, smiling, polite, heartily hating each other.

XIII

JANE MAKES AN ASSERTION

WHEN Wogan and Jane were left alone, Wogan went up to the girl and commended her play-acting. "Well done, you," he said, "for an impish princess. You showed the royal devil of a temper." He meant well, and to praise, but his purpose failed wofully.

The girl rose to her feet and confronted him with clenched hands and angry eyes, a flame-faced fury in borrowed plumes. "Are you in love with your pretty Princess?" she asked, with the savage sharpness of an animal that snaps at a caressing hand.

Wogan was staggered by the ferocity of her attack as a man might be staggered on a summer's day by the sudden grumbling of an earthquake. "Child," he cried, in dismay, "are you wild? I see her Highness almost for the first time."

Jane shrugged her shoulders and smiled sourly, with her lids drawn together and her eyes glinting wickedly through two slits. "Did you never hear of love at first sight?" she asked, deriding him patently.

Wogan shook his head. "You are crazy," he

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protested, "or else it is ashamed of yourself you would be to think such thoughts."

The girl laughed bitterly. "Oh," she said, "you must not think me a dunce or a dummy. I noticed how your eyes widened and your lips tightened as you looked at her."

Wogan began to feel an unreasonable, an unnecessary rage of indignation at the girl's fancy. "For Heaven's sake hold your tongue!" he ordered, hotly. "She is a royal princess, the plighted bride of my King, and you are a wicked vixen to whisper such mischief. Now go to your bed and your headache as fast as you can!"

The girl closed her eyes wholly for an instant, then opened them widely and stared defiantly at Wogan. Without a word she turned to go, then she swiftly turned back and extended her hands to him. "I am doing a good deal for you, Charles Wogan," she said, wistfully, "because I like you, and for this Princess of yours, whom I do not like at all. Are you going to give me nothing to cheer my spirits in this predicament?"

Wogan looked at the girl uneasily. Her tricks and caprices teased him with an unexpected sense of novelty in their new and perilous environment. He was eager to pacify her, to placate her on whom so much depended, but he knew not the means to that end.

"What can I give you, Jane?" he asked, gently enough, but he was wishing in his heart that he

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had pitched upon some less whimsical confederate.

Jane gazed at him in frank amazement. "And you an Irishman," she said, pathetically, "to be asking that same." And as she spoke she tiptoed a little and tilted her pretty, impudent face nearer to his, and her red mouth made invitation.

All Wogan's thoughts were far away from careless kisses. He was an Irishman, and he knew the sweetness of young lips and the innocence with which they often took and gave salutation, and he would, as a rule, have found himself ready enough for the pleasant encounter. But now he knew not wherefore, or he would not allow himself to know wherefore, he wished with all his heart that Jane had asked him for some other favor. It was nothing indeed to kiss a pretty girl who was doing you a service, and who demanded such dainty payment, and yet, somehow, just then it seemed to Wogan a great price to pay, and he resented bitterly the having to pay it. But there was no help for it.

"Forgive me," he pleaded, with as gay an air as he could command of being one that was caught in an obvious sin of omission, and was eager to prove his contrition. He bent and kissed the soft mouth that was proffered to his embrace, but for the life of him he could not contrive to make the salute either warm or convincing, and Jane first flushed and then paled as she received the unimpassioned caress. Wogan cursed himself for being

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so poor a player. He rested his hand for an instant tenderly upon the girl's head.

"Good-night, Jane," he murmured; "good-night, and God bless you for your help."

Jane was almost sobbing; tears misted her eyes; she tried to speak, and words came in a broken voice. "God bless you, Charles Wogan," she faltered, "and guard you from all dangers and keep your soul as straight as your body."

She swung on her heels when she had said her little speech, and disappeared through the doors of the Princess's bedroom. Wogan looked after her sadly enough. Then, thrusting his hand into his breast-pocket, he drew thence the miniature of the Princess Clementina, and gazed at it earnestly.

Up to this time the whole matter had been no more to Wogan than an adventure, one more brilliant episode in the life of a man whose life had been all adventure for well-nigh as long as he could clearly remember. To filch a princess from the fingers that kept her prisoner was no greater enterprise than to invade England for the King's cause, or to break prison at Newgate when that cause had been lost. It was all in the day's work for one that served King James and loved his service. But now, all of a sudden, the business in hand seemed very different from any other business that he had undertaken on his King's behalf. He found himself abruptly warned by a girl's words that he had a secret, and that he must be persistently watch-

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ful lest his secret should cease to be his secret. It was natural that the lady whom fate had placed so strangely in his care should be often in his thoughts; perhaps it was natural that those thoughts should change their temper, or, it may be, more clearly define their temper, as the swift passage of time had again brought him face to face with the Princess and made the promised intimacy of the common peril seem the sweeter. But Wogan fought stubbornly against the frank recognition of the misfortune that had come upon him. The thing should not be; therefore it could not be; so he strove to argue with himself, so he strove to silence the voice of his heart.

Wogan seemed to be thinking for an age during the few seconds in which he stared at the portrait of the Princess. The painter had done his work well; there was no need for him to be courtly in flattery; he was only called upon to reproduce Clementina's loveliness as cunningly as he could. The beauty of the miniature had roused the rapturous enthusiasm of Wogan's comrades in the enterprise on the day when he had shown it to them during their meeting at the "Blue Moon" in Strasbourgh. Wogan had known then well enough that the image, exquisite though it was, could give no true idea of its original. He knew that better now, after looking again on Clementina's face.

With a sigh Wogan lifted the picture toward his lips as if with the intention of kissing the painted

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presentment. Suddenly he restrained himself, and with another sigh he thrust the portrait back into its hiding-place. He caught sight of his face in a mirror, and saw that he was frowning grimly. He shook his head at his reflection, remembered his philosophy of life, and forced his features to wear their habitual, cheerful smile. Rapidly he passed into the antechamber to take farewell of Monsieur de Chateaudoux before rejoining the adventurous Princess.

XIV

A WINTRY TRYST

WHEN the Princess passed out of the room which she had regarded for so long as a hateful prison she moved like one in a dream that is filled with warring joys and terrors toward her appointed tryst. All manner of unexpected apprehensions thrilled her in her first moments of liberty. She could scarcely believe that she was really free. She felt suddenly that she could scarcely hope now to reach the meeting-place unperceived, unrecognized, and unchecked, though she had been so certain of success before she began to make the experiment. Yet if she was swiftly fearful she speedily began to reassure herself when she found that all she had planned came to pass untroubled. She descended the empty stairway; she crossed the dark and silent garden; she easily opened the seldom-used door, and a moment later she found herself standing in the deserted street, holding her breath, in the shadow of the deserted mansion.

Clementina's spirits sang within her. The enterprise, indeed, seemed to promise well, and her elation of thought was so great that she was abso-

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lutely indifferent to the condition of the weather, though that condition was cruel enough. A sullen day had broken into a stormy evening. The streets through which the Princess had to make her way to the place of meeting were thickly carpeted with an ugly mixture of snow and mud, and a sleety rain, stirred by a bitter wind, was falling heavily. Yet to Clementina, in her high delight at her unexpected franchise, the dripping roads might have been strewn with roses and the icy wind as temperate as any Arabian breeze. Indeed, too, there was reason to welcome the wildness of the night. Thanks to the lateness of the hour and the inclemency of the elements, nobody was likely to be abroad, and thus an additional chance of favor was afforded to the evasion.

There was a further advantage for the fugitive Princess in the ferocity of the elements. As she emerged from the lane that fringed the garden wall into the street in which her residence stood she glanced anxiously toward the front of the house, where it was the duty of the sentinel to stand. Although she felt sure that the night was too dark to make her visible, she was relieved to see that the house was unguarded. The sentinel—this she learned later—wearied by the fury of the storm to which he was exposed in all its rigors, as he was not accorded the shelter of a sentry-box, had surrendered to the temptation of an adjacent tavern, and had abandoned what he might well regard as a useless

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duty for the more congenial pleasures of the wine-house. The soldier's absence seemed a good omen to Clementina, and it was with a more hopeful spirit that she continued her grim journey.

Clementina did not encounter a human being during the course of her brief journey from the house to the alley leading to the bridge, where Wogan had promised to join her. She crept along through the darkness and the storm, sheltering herself as much as possible from the drenching showers that nevertheless made their way through the heavy horseman's cloak that encompassed her and wetted her to the skin. As she approached the black mouth of the alley she paused, and again her terrors began to assail her. If any one were to pass by and to discern her where she skulked in the darkest shadow she could find, he might be pricked by curiosity as to the reason for a woman's vigil at such a place and on such a night. Curiosity might urge him to investigation; investigation might lead to recognition; recognition would surely mean the ruin of her dream. As she fought against this fear and seemed to conquer it, new cares began to assail the girl. How if, after all, Wogan were not able to come; if, by some chance, his identity had been discovered after her departure, or if he found it impossible to find an excuse for evading the importunate hospitality of the Governor. Every possible and impossible reason for Wogan's non-appearance was considered by the Princess's busy brain.

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When speculation seemed finally ended by the appearance of a man muffled in a heavy riding-cloak, who walked directly toward the spot where she was crouching, she was racked anew by a sudden fear that even now this might prove to be some one other than Wogan, some night-walker curious and presuming, some emissary sent to stay her flight. This fear was speedily dissipated by the welcome sound of Wogan's voice, and in another moment, taking Wogan's hand, she was accompanying him cautiously in the direction of the bridge, which they had to cross on their pilgrimage toward the inn. It was a bitter pilgrimage. The way was worse than ever. The fury of the storm had increased. Great pools of melted snow lay in their path indistinguishable and not to be avoided.

As they drew near to the bridge their progress was impeded by the volume of a current of water which flowed directly across their path. Wogan, casting about for some way to get the Princess across the stream dry-shod, perceived, as he thought, a line of white paving-stones set down in the middle of the watercourse to serve as a kind of causeway. Overjoyed at this discovery, he pointed these seeming stones out to the Princess as the path she should take. But Wogan was mistaken in his guess. The seeming passage was only caused by an accumulation of straw which had been stopped by the snow as it drifted, and the moment that Clementina made to set foot on it she sank instantly in the water up

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to the calves of her legs. Wogan was covered with confusion at his blunder, but the Princess took it, as she seemed to take all the perils and discomforts of the night's adventure, with a light heart, and only asked him, laughingly, what he thought Monsieur de Chateaudoux would say if he could but know of her predicament. Nevertheless, she found herself heartily envying Wogan the high horseman's boots which protected his legs so effectually from the water that made havoc with her stockings. At last, after what seemed an age-long journey through night and storm, dripping but cheerful, the Princess found herself and her companion standing before the door of a small inn in the outskirts of the town.

XV

AT THE "BLACK EAGLE"

THE inn that had a black eagle for its sign was an unpretentious building in the outskirts of the town, which was invariably ignored by visitors of gentility and distinction. Such personages made their way, as the Prince of Niemen had done, to the "Golden Crown" in the centre of habitation. But the modesty of the "Black Eagle" was its chief merit in the eyes of the little company of conspirators that were now for the time being sheltered beneath its roof. They had not, indeed, long enjoyed such shelter before they were pleased to discover that the hostlery had other merits on which its sombre bird might very well plume itself. The host had a wife that knew how to cook; the host had a cellar that guarded several flasks of very fair wine; good food and good drinking made the "Black Eagle" a pleasanter place to enter than to leave on such a night of warring elements.

Yet the little company that had rallied under the roof of the "Black Eagle," with tempers very different from those that would have become most travellers in their condition, were far more eager

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for departing than for abiding, and paradoxically welcomed the hideous weather for the uncomfortable but excellent cloak that it afforded to their plot. They had foregathered exactly as had been planned. Misset with his wife had arrived a little the first, but were soon joined by Gaydon and O'Toole. The Missets had travelled from Strasbourgh in the coach that Wogan had provided for them, the coach that was to be their ark for the Princess's safety on their expedition to Italy. The other two had travelled a-horseback, and stabled their nags in the low, gaunt stables of the "Black Eagle," where they found two horses already waiting, which they guessed to be the steeds that had carried Wogan and Jane to Innspruck.

Here is what happened at Strasbourgh immediately after the Prince of Niemen had gone forth to take the air of a certain meadow in the company of three Irish gentlemen of Dillon's regiment. Wogan had at once made his way to the room reserved for the use of the ladies, and there he had found Jane, in faithful obedience to the instructions given to her a little earlier, transformed into the seeming of a complete cavalier. Her pretty body was muffled out of all loveliness in a man's habiliments and a man's riding-cloak, and her pretty, impertinent face was almost entirely concealed by a large hat and a monstrous periwig. Wogan, like a careful campaigner, had made provision of all the garments necessary for the travesty, and caused them to be conveyed to

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the room reserved for the ladies in a portmanteau long before their arrival, which proves that he counted very confidently upon Jane's willingness to agree to his wishes.

Jane pretended to be very much embarrassed by her change of gear, but, as a matter of fact, she was rather diverted by this prelude to adventure, and she took leave of Mistress Misset with more of the laughter of a knight-errant than the tears of a transmogrified damsel, to ride with Wogan to Innspruck. Mistress Misset waited with wifely patience for her husband's return from the field of fight, whose encounter ended so ignominiously for O'Toole, and then he and she set off in their turn for the theatre of their attempt. Gaydon and O'Toole mounted their horses and rode off by another route after explaining to the landlord that the English gentleman was lying indisposed on a couch in a side room, and that it might be well to look after him carefully, a piece of information which the landlord of the "Blue Moon" received with a reverent bow and an irreverent wink.

At first O'Toole rode sulky and silent, resisting stubbornly all Gaydon's attempts to draw him into conversation, and gloomily brooding on his unexpected humiliation at the hands of the Prince of Niemen. However, after a short spell of hard riding—for they wished to reach Innspruck before the Prince of Niemen, who, as they guessed, would be for journeying thither—O'Toole seemed to re-

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cover his spirits a little and began to talk with something of his wonted cheerfulness. He had mended so well by the time they came to the Austrian frontier, that when they had crossed and were well in the dominion of Cæsar he plucked a pistol from his holster and, encouraging Gaydon to do the like, both discharged their weapons into the air as a signal that they there and then declared war upon the Emperor, who, as Gaydon observed dryly, would be seriously alarmed if he knew what redoubtable enemies were menacing him. So, in due course, the pair reached Innspruck and the "Black Eagle," and found Misset and his wife and a comfortable meal awaiting them.

But neither the sense of companionship, nor security from the storm, nor the cheer of meat and wine could keep anxiety from the hearts and faces of the party. Each individual was wondering how Wogan was faring, and what unforeseen difficulties might have occurred, and, though all tried not to talk of the subject of their preoccupation, they could think of nothing else, and so insensibly came to talk of nothing else. Time that was wont for most of them to move so briskly now crawled by with leaden feet. Faces haggard with care consulted the clock unceasingly. "Would Wogan ever come?" was the question in each mind.

At last, when desperate impatience had almost yielded to a despairing apathy, Mistress Misset heard the sound of footsteps without and caught at

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her husband's hand. In another instant the door of the room opened and Wogan entered with a woman by his side, a woman enveloped in a heavy riding-cloak, a woman drenched with rain and tousled by the wind, a woman with a face very young and very beautiful peeping from the dripping folds of the riding-hood.

All present rose to their feet, holding their breaths. Wogan spoke. "Mistress Misset and friends," he said, "you are honored by the presence of the Princess Clementina Sobieski."

Instantly the three men knelt before their royal guest, while Mistress Misset came forward from the corner where she had been waiting anxiously for this moment and made Clementina a deep reverence, which the Princess instantly stayed by catching at Mistress Misset's hands and drawing her toward her, while with a glance she invited the gentlemen to rise as well.

Mistress Misset was visibly concerned to find her dear Princess, that was to be her dear Queen, in so bedraggled a condition. She was not surprised, indeed, to find Clementina looking pale. The hazards of the night, the strain of expectation, might well banish color from the girlish cheeks, though, indeed, Clementina carried herself with a very admirable sprightliness, and seemed now in the presence of these spectators to consider the whole matter as no more than an amusing adventure. But Mistress Misset was seriously

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alarmed at the sopping state of Clementina's garments.

On the instant, and for the instant, she took command of the situation, seeing with womanly swiftness what was needful to be done, and carrying out her purpose with womanly directness. She insisted peremptorily on an immediate change of raiment. She ordered all the gentlemen to leave the room, and as soon as they had done her bidding she constituted herself the Princess's lady-in-waiting, nurse, and body-servant all in one, and proceeded to tend her very expeditiously.

First she took off the Princess's wet shoes and stockings, rubbed and dried her feet and legs as well as she could with sheets snatched from the bed in an adjoining room, for the fire had gone out, and Mistress Misset did not think it advisable at that late hour to call for a fresh fire for fear of giving suspicion. Then she put on the Princess a clean pair of stockings and a pair of shoes of her own. All the while that she did this the good woman was encouraging the Princess, who, indeed, seemed to need little encouragement, with all manner of bright speeches, hopeful prognostications, and devoted compliments such as only so sweet a woman as Mistress Misset could address to so sweet a Princess.

Mistress Misset's next care was to extract from the same valise that had already provided the shoes and stockings a complete change of raiment for

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her illustrious charge—shift, stays, petticoats, everything necessary. Thereafter, as dexterously as deferentially, she divested Clementina of her soaked and sodden garments, and got her dainty body into the dry clothes with astonishing swiftness. "Never," says the historian of the event, "has a princess been stripped of her garments and clad in those of another in so short a time." During all this shifting and drying the Princess never ceased to smile and to seem as blithe as a school-girl engaged upon some school-girl's escapade, nor did Mistress Misset cease to run on, graciously garrulous, with her words of sympathy and good cheer. In that whimsical episode the pair of women that had never seen each other before, and were so widely removed in station, the great Princess and the poor soldier's wife, made friends instantly, and by the time that Clementina stood up in dry linen she felt as if she had known her helpful companion intimately for years.

While the Princess and Mistress Misset were thus busy together Wogan and his brothers-in-arms exchanged joyous greetings. Wogan could not forbear to rally O'Toole a little upon his unfortunate misadventure with the Prince of Niemen, but he soon saw that the honest giant was so mortified by the miscarriage of his valor that he held his peace and said no more about the matter. He dispatched Gaydon to the post-house for the necessary horses which had been promised for that night, and while he waited their arrival he told O'Toole and Misset

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all that had occurred since he parted from them. When Gaydon arrived with the horses Wogan went to the room in which the Princess was, and, knocking at the door, inquired if she were ready to start, Clementina answering gladly that she was ready and eager. Wogan returned to his companions and aided them and the sleepy ostler to load the coach with their belongings.

It was by this time quite late, being long past midnight, and no one was awake in the inn save themselves, and the said sleepy ostler, and the inn-keeper's wife, that sat watchful in her room to receive settlement of her charges. This settlement Wogan commissioned O'Toole to execute, and while O'Toole, in obedience to his instructions, was chaffering and haggling in High Dutch with the good woman, and entirely absorbing her attention in questions of figures and coins, Wogan took advantage of the occasion to escort his charge and Mistress Misset, unnoticed, to the coach, where it stood at the door of the inn.

The Princess, more comfortable now with her body new-dried and new-linened, and her legs new-stockinged and new-shod, climbed in, followed by Mistress Misset. Wogan, Gaydon, and O'Toole mounted their own horses, Misset took the nag that had mounted Mistress Jane; the little company of cavaliers stationed themselves, two on each side of the equipage, and the party started off at a brisk rate, hoping to leave Innspruck forever behind them.

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That hope was swiftly troubled. The company had not proceeded very far on their road, when the Princess asked Wogan where her jewels were disposed. Now this was the first time that Wogan had heard of these jewels, or knew that the Princess was carrying them, and he questioned her somewhat anxiously as to her meaning. Thereupon the Princess told him that when she had quitted the palace she had placed all her jewels, which were many and valuable, in a silver casket in a leather case, which casket and case she had under her arm when she was waiting for Wogan, and which casket she had set down in the inn-room on her arrival when she surrendered herself to the friendly ministrations of Mistress Misset. The Princess, that was used all her life to be waited on, and was for the first time learning to shift for herself, had naturally enough taken it for granted that some one of her company would look after the jewel-case, never reflecting that none of her company knew of its existence.

Hurriedly Wogan called a halt and the coach was searched, Mistress Misset and the Princess aiding with eager fingers, but there was no sign of the missing casket of which Wogan had been in ignorance, and which Mistress Misset truly protested she had not seen. Here was, indeed, a calamity that the Princess should thus lose at a stroke so great a part of her fortunes, and to lose it in so pitiful a fashion, for had she left the jewels behind in

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the house at Innspruck they would at least have been safe, and very likely returned to her at some later date, whereas now they would serve no other purpose than to enrich the greedy innkeeper.

Such was the first fear of the little fellowship of fugitives, but this little fear was soon swallowed up by a greater. If the jewel-casket were discovered the richness of its contents would instantly apprise the finder that it had belonged to some one of importance, some one of importance that was leaving Innspruck under conditions of secrecy. Suspicions thus aroused would speedily point to the illustrious captive; the alarm would be given, the Princess's dwelling searched, her absence made manifest. Then would come inevitable pursuit and inevitable capture, which would mean to the Princess a return to a captivity more strict and rigorous than before, and would mean to her four soldiers death upon the scaffold. No one of the four adventurers would have grudged his life as the price of the Princess's freedom, but to lose it in a failure, in a foiled and baffled enterprise, was indeed bitter.

In the midst of the confusion, gloom, and perturbation the cheery voice of O'Toole asserted itself in an offer to ride back to the inn and see what might be done there in the way of recovering the missing casket. The proposal seemed a hopeless one enough, for it was scarcely likely that the people at the inn would have failed to discover so great a treasure, or, having discovered it, would ever be

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persuaded either to admit the discovery or to yield up the contents. However, poor though the chance was, it was at least a chance, and in another moment O'Toole had turned his horse and was galloping as fast as he could in the direction of the inn they had so lately quitted. Wogan could not himself have volunteered for this office. It was his duty to keep by the side of the Princess from the moment that she placed herself into his custody, and to shield her as long as he could from danger.

The little party passed a gloomy space of time there in the dark and dripping highway, where the only sounds that broke the stillness were the restless paces and frettings of the horses, that resented standing in the rain, and were impatient to proceed, and the stamping of the driver's feet against his board in the effort to keep them warm. Minute after minute passed by with leaden feet, Wogan and Mistress Misset bitterly reproaching themselves for the blunder, which, after all, was no fault of theirs, and the Princess, then as ever the bravest of the party, doing her best to cheer them and dissipate their regret. All of a sudden Wogan heard the distant sound of the galloping of a horse. It drew nearer, louder and louder, the hoofs splashing on the drenched highway, and in another minute O'Toole drew rein beside the carriage, waving in his hand a large, black object, which he presented to the Princess, and which was no other than the missing casket.

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In a moment the gloom was dissipated and joy animated all hearts. O'Toole explained the discovery, wonderfully little short of miraculous.

When he got back to the inn he found the house shut for the night and all dark and quiet. The darkness and the quiet had a reassuring effect upon the good giant, who reflected that if the jewels had indeed been discovered, and if the discoverer intended to give the alarm, the inn would probably show signs of life and light. It was necessary, however, for O'Toole somehow or other to effect an entry into the inn, and he was wisely reluctant to call attention to his return and its reason by rousing the house and demanding admittance. Luckily for him, however, the good folk of Innsbruck slept in a comfortable sense of security, which left them under no great necessity to make their doors fast. The tired hostess had simply shut her front door without either locking or bolting it. O'Toole opening it cautiously felt his way to the room where the Princess had been, and groping about it in the darkness found the jewel-case in the corner exactly where the Princess had said that she placed it. It was plain that no one had been at the pains to visit the room after the departure of the guests, and to this strange and unexpected chance was owed the safety of the casket.

O'Toole made his way out as noiselessly as he had made his way in—for a big man he could on occasion move very deftly and quietly—and rode off with all

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speed, hugging his precious burden, to the spot where his anxious companions were waiting for him. The party now resumed its interrupted journey with spirits comforted and hearts uplifted by the good omen of the recovered jewels.

XVI

DISCOVERY

THE habitual quiet of the residence of General Heister at Innsbruck was rudely disturbed at about noon of the following day by the arrival in a travelling carriage of a very sick-looking English gentleman, whose plump countenance was strangely drawn and haggard, whose naturally ruddy complexion was sadly mottled, and whose whole bearing showed signs of grave physical discomfort and grave mental agitation. This Englishman demanded an interview with the Governor, announcing himself as Sir Timothy Wynstock, envoy from Great Britain. He was assured by the General's majordomo, and the assurance only served to increase the redness of his rage and the blackness of his dejection, that the English envoy with the difficult name had already been received by the Governor, and was of his own choice lodging at the "Black Eagle."

At this staggering information, which confirmed his worst fears, the indignant Sir Timothy broke into such a storm of objurgation as staggered even the habitual composure of an Austrian official.

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Sir Timothy, out of compliment to his royal master, had been at some pains to acquire a smattering of High Dutch, a smattering indeed which represented a knowledge shared by not half a hundred of his fellow-countrymen. Therefore, when Sir Timothy, sick and indignant, standing at the door of General Heister's residence in Innspruck, found that the volume of his fairly fluent French, although it interpreted fairly enough his own rage and distress, had little or no effect in conveying its meaning to the mind, through the ears, of General Heister's majordomo, he turned the current of his wrath into the channel of such tutored German as he could command.

Thereupon an avalanche of wild and confused words descended upon General Heister's majordomo and threatened to smother him in its confused bulk. From forth a chaos of warring genders and irreconcilable verbs and nouns, all muffled in a bewildering British accent, the astonished Austrian official contrived to gather dimly some idea of an alleged plot in which a mysterious stranger, an inn in Strasbourgh, and flagons of horribly medicated vintages played their bewildering part. The less the majordomo could make head or tail of Sir Timothy's narrative the more vociferous and voluble Sir Timothy became, to the more complete confusion of both parties concerned.

At last, after enduring the volume of British indignation for a great while, the majordomo decided

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that the Governor should be informed of his visitor and of his visitor's amazing claim. General Heister was surprised at the news, and inclined to be suspicious of the sanity of the new arrival; but after due reflection the Governor consented to receive Wynstock, and explained in reasonably good French to that furiously indignant gentleman that he had already received a visit on the previous day from a duly accredited English envoy, who had chosen, as the General, echoing his majordomo, explained, to lie at the "Black Eagle." Wynstock explained afresh, as coherently as his choler would allow, the plot of which he had been made a victim, and the robbery of his papers, and he insisted on being immediately presented to the Princess, to visit whom he had travelled so far and endured so much.

Now the Governor had not seen the Princess that morning. In reply to his usual request, carried by his orderly, for permission to wait upon her, the orderly was informed by Monsieur de Chateaudoux that her Highness was suffering severely from a headache, and wished to keep her room. The statement was not in the least suspicious, although it was the first time such an excuse had been made since Clementina had become an unwilling resident of the town. Now this sudden and amazing arrival of a man that told so astonishing a story jogged the Governor's wits with whispers of alarm. Begging Sir Timothy to be patient awhile, he again sent his orderly with a peremptory message to the

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Princess that he must see her immediately, headache or no headache. He also dispatched another messenger to the "Black Eagle" Inn to request the English gentleman that was lodging there to be so good as to wait upon him with all convenient speed.

The answer from the Princess's residence naturally came first, and again conveyed the assurances of Monsieur de Chateaudoux that her Highness was indisposed and could receive no one. In the mean time the assertions of the irate Sir Timothy were having more and more effect upon the Governor's mind. General Heister saw plainly that his latest visitor was very angry indeed, but he also saw that he was perfectly sane, and that he told his astonishing story with every show of circumstance and conviction. Sorely troubled and puzzled, he resolved to visit the Princess forthwith, and see her in spite of all remonstrances. Attended by the still vociferous Wynstock, whose clamorous demands to accompany him were not to be gainsaid, he walked, or, rather, ran, the little distance that separated his residence from the abode of the Princess. On the threshold he encountered his messenger from the "Black Eagle" with the tidings that all the party that had met there on the previous evening had taken their departure late at night. Full of unspeakable fears, the General dashed into the house, swept Chateaudoux and his protestations on one side, and stormed into the Princess's apartment, with Wyn-

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stock at his heels and Chateaudoux behind them, piteously wringing his hands.

The irate Governor was faced by a couple of Clementina's women that seemed thoroughly frightened by the Governor's fury. They repeated in chorus, as it were, what had already been sent to the Governor as a message, that the Princess was confined to her room with a headache and could see no one. The answer was not satisfactory to the indignant General, spurred by vague, incoherent, and troubled suspicions. Pushing between the pair, who parted before him in terror, he advanced rapidly to the door of the Princess's bedchamber and walked defiantly in.

The room was lapped in darkness and in silence, but in another moment the General had parted the curtains, let in a flood of light, and turned to the seeming sleeping figure in the bed. The sleeper's head was averted, but the General addressed the occupant of the bed sternly.

"Princess," he said, "you must forgive this intrusion on my part, but it is of the utmost necessity that I must assure myself of your presence."

As he spoke he saw the sleeping figure move; the shoulders shook with some uncontrollable emotion; which seemed distinctly to resolve itself into an explosion of a hysterical giggle. Roused beyond patience, the Governor stepped to the bed, seized the occupant by her shaking shoulders, and turned her face to the light, staring in furious despair at

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the half-laughing, half-crying face of Jane Gordon. Any desire on Jane's part to laugh at the situation in which she found herself vanished swiftly before the torrent of imprecations and oburgations levelled at her by the furious Governor. In reply to his questions as to where the Princess was, Jane could only stammer out truthfully enough that she did not know. Within a few seconds the Governor was face to face with the Princess Sobieski, and was favored with a perusal of the letter addressed to her by Clementina on the previous night. Now the nature of the plot was revealed to the Governor. It was idle for him to vent his rage on the Princess Sobieski, who, on the evidence of her errant daughter's letter, had been or appeared to have been as much bamboozled as the Governor himself. It was idle to vent his rage on Monsieur de Chateaudoux, who was no more than a servant of the missing Clementina, and scarcely to be blamed for obeying such instructions as were conveyed to him. So, after giving orders that the impostor-girl was to be clothed with all speed and conducted to his residence, he went storming back to the tragically agitated Wynstock, waiting anxiously in the antechamber, and told him of the disaster that had befallen him. Choking with rage, the pair hurried back to the General's quarters, whence his Excellency instantly dispatched a courier on the route to Italy to warn all the officers in command of garrison towns to arrest the fugitives if they made their appearance.

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He also dispatched a messenger to the Prince of Niemen at the "Golden Crown" requesting his immediate company.

When the Prince, in obedience to the unexpected summons, hastened to General Heister's residence, and was ushered into the Governor's room, he saw before him two very inflamed and crestfallen gentlemen. The Governor explained to the Prince what had happened, hurriedly presenting the real British envoy, who in his turn explained the trick that had been played upon him. If the Governor had been furious, the Prince was now the most furious of the three, but he kept his feelings under better control and his wits were more alert.

In the first place, what had happened reflected no discredit on him. The Governor of Innsbruck had been deceived, and the deception might cost him his office. Sir Timothy Wynstock had been grotesquely bubbled, and his reputation as a man of affairs must suffer. His Serenity the Prince of Niemen stood to lose nothing—except, indeed, his bride and her British dowry—and could see nothing to blame himself for. There was no reason for him to doubt the urbane and plausible gentleman of the "Blue Moon" in Strasbourgh, who spoke French with a slightly foreign accent, and who presented papers that were perfectly in order and that seemed unquestionably to guarantee the personality of the bearer. But if the Prince failed to blame himself for anything that had happened in the past, he

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lost no time in endeavoring to repair what had occurred and to make provision for a better policy in the future. The Prince of Niemen was a gentleman of swift decision where questions touching his own advantage were concerned, and he had made up his mind as to what he meant to do while General Heister was wasting time in a futile cross-examination of the sham Princess.

The now decidedly terrified Jane Gordon had been hurriedly huddled into some clothes and conveyed to the residence of General Heister. There she was brought into the presence of the three men, and was instantly recognized by the Prince of Niemen as the woman with whom he had spoken on the previous evening under the impression that he was conversing with the Princess Clementina. This served to mark fairly accurately the time at which the Princess had made her escape, and to prove the considerable start she must have had on her journey.

Whither that journey tended it was fairly safe to guess. The Princess would naturally make for Italy, where her future husband was domiciled. The main thing was to overtake her if possible while she was still within the limits of the Emperor's territory. The question as to who the daring individual might be who had so successfully personated the representative of the Majesty of Great Britain seemed harder to settle. The girl Jane Gordon refused directly to give any information as

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to his identity, though the Governor stormed and raged and menaced. He even went so far as to threaten bodily punishment with rods and scourges, but here Sir Timothy Wynstock interposed, protesting with stiff Whiggish dignity that he could not agree to such mediæval methods of coercing a witness that was plainly a lady of birth and breeding. After all, as the Prince of Niemen pertinently observed, it mattered very little who the man was; all that really mattered was to try to regain control of the fugitive fair one.

So Jane was sent back a prisoner to the dwelling of Princess Sobieski. The Prince of Niemen protested his readiness to set out at once on the road which he believed to be the likeliest to follow if the Governor would agree to favor him with an armed escort sufficiently strong to apprehend the fugitives if once they were overtaken. Sir Timothy, albeit gravely shaken by the effects of his ill-timed potations, announced his willingness to ride with the Prince.

The Governor consented to the Prince's request, and diminished the strength of his garrison by a force of twenty horse, who were placed under his Highness's commands. By General Heister's orders fresh couriers were dispatched in all directions, riding at their utmost speed to carry information to all whom it might concern of the evasion of the Princess, and summoning all liege subjects of the Emperor to restrain her flight and detain her in

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custody. But ere the earliest of these could throw a leg over a saddle the Prince and Wynstock were riding at headlong speed the finest horses in Innspruck on the road to the Brenner, followed at a little distance by twenty well-armed horsemen.

XVII

FLIGHT

THE early hours of that astonishing evasion seemed to pass, to all the company—but most of all to Wogan, that was responsible for the whole attempt—with the shifting rapidity of a whimsical dream. Wogan had promised his driver and postilions such generous drink-money if they made a good pace that the honest fellows urged their cattle to their utmost capacity. Thus they arrived at the summit of the Brenner pass, which was the first stage in their journey, and no less than five mortal leagues from their point of departure, a very little while after the sun had begun to show himself.

Here, while the horses were being changed, the Princess, who up to this time had seemed in the best of spirits and of a most admirable courage, suddenly cast her companions into alarm by falling into a swoon. She grew deathly pale, seemed incapable of breathing, and lay in her place in the carriage as motionless as if she had ceased to live. Good Mistress Misset, her pretty face all bathed with the plenitude of her tears, rubbed the unhappy lady's hands in the hope of rekindling in them the

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vital warmth, and the four cavaliers felt their own eyes wet with unfamiliar moisture at the piteous spectacle.

Suddenly and luckily Mistress Misset recollected that she had in her pocket a little bottle of Water of Carmes, a most excellent cordial, with whose aid she succeeded in restoring the fainting Princess to consciousness. When Clementina looked about her and saw all those that attended her with lugubrious visages and tears in their eyes she first sighed and then smiled, as if she felt that she must do her endeavor to keep up the cheer of her friends.

"Ah, little woman," she said, gayly enough, to Mistress Misset, "take courage." Then she addressed the four gentlemen that undoubtedly cut droll figures enough, like so many Knights of the Sorrowful Countenance. "And you, too," she said, "my poor marmosets, cheer up, for this is nothing."

The four gentlemen, tickled in spite of their tribulation by being addressed as marmosets, could not for the life of them help surrendering to a fit of laughter, whose noisy reverberations seemed to divert the little Princess hugely. Thereafter, to the end of the journey, the Princess never failed to speak of Mistress Misset as "little woman," and of the four soldiers as her "marmosets." Wogan had the further distinction, in the beginning, of being called Papa Wogan, but the use of this pet name ceased after a while, for particular reasons hereinafter to be set forth.

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The journey was resumed with even greater rapidity than before. If they had mounted to the summit of the Brenner like a rocket, to cite the vivid phrase of O'Toole, they descended it like a flash of lightning. They stopped nowhere save for the inevitable necessity of changing horses. They made no meals in any of the inns on the road, but subsisted as well as they could on the provisions with which they had victualled the coach before leaving Innspruck. These consisted chiefly of certain cold capons, which proved to be very old, and made monstrous tough eating, but which still were better than nothing to seasoned campaigners like Wogan and his three comrades of Dillon's.

As for the little Princess, she took all the discomforts of the road as bravely and as gayly as if she had followed the wars herself for years, and nibbled at the arid granite of the capon flesh as if it had been a most exquisite delicacy. The gentlemen took it turn and turn about to sit with her Highness in the coach and share the repasts with her. Those that were not, as it were, admitted to the presence rode by the side of the carriage, leading their companions' mounts, and making shift to eat their meals as well as they could in the saddle.

With their descent from the summit of the Brenner came a comfortable change in their condition. The intemperance of the snow and the snapping cold that they had suffered from since their departure from Innspruck ceased to exist, and as they

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continued their journey toward Italy they did so with a changed air and a changed climate. They moved through a charming spring, they were warmed by a bright sun, they breathed a sweet and temperate air.

They had their little adventures on the road, adventures that appeared quite thrilling and significant in the early stages of their escapade, until they were dwarfed out of all reckoning by the magnitude of a later peril. Yet those early risks and misadventures were great enough to have seemed truly terrible to any fellowship of travellers. How much the more therefore might they not have appeared portentous in the eyes of these four honest gentlemen that were doing their best to convey in safety a young and beautiful princess to one that was to be her husband, and that one a prince whom they loved and honored with all their hearts and souls as the rightful King of England wrongfully dispossessed and driven into exile by a damnable alliance of knaves, fools, and traitors.

There was, for instance, the alarming episode on the miserable mountain road which crowned a precipice a hundred feet high above the river Adige. As the carriage containing the Princess and her companions was proceeding at full speed along the narrow place, which was wholly undefended on the side of the precipice, there came slowly lumbering into view, travelling in the opposite direction, a heavy country-side wagon. Those that were con-

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ductors of this same wagon, seeing from afar the coach and horses tearing along the narrow way where there was scarcely a possible means of passage for two vehicles, instantly secured for their wagon the side of the road nearest to the mountain, leaving to the coach the side which gave on to the precipice and the Adige foaming below. The driver and the postilion of the coach which carried Clementina and her fortunes, whether they were merely drunk or merely careless, continued their course with unchanged velocity, as recklessly as if they were driving on the widest highway of some well-ordered town, without taking the slightest notice of the wagon that encumbered the narrow path.

O'Toole, that was riding behind with Gaydon, at a little distance off saw the danger, and, putting spurs to his horse, galloped after the coach that seemed careering to its doom. Thoroughly regardless of his own life, and firmly resolved, as he afterward admitted to Wogan, to leap into the abyss after the coach, if indeed it rode to its ruin, he managed somehow to guide his horse along the crumbling edge of the ravine just at the moment when the Princess's carriage, whirling past the plodding and blocking wagon, seemed on the very point of toppling from the road into the chasm. With the desperation of despair O'Toole lashed out with his whip at the staggering horses; his blows and oaths seemed to have the effect of forcing them to an increased speed, which just managed to pre-

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serve the equilibrium of the coach until it had been carried past the cart and was in undisputed possession of such highway as there was once more.

O'Toole was scarcely to be blamed if, once the moment of danger was past, his fury of fear turned into a fury of rage which spent itself upon the loutish and stockish driver and postilion, whom he treated to such a volley of blows from his whip, and to such a volley of oaths from his tongue, that his strokes and oburgations, while they had the desired effect of bringing the driver and postilion to a proper sense of their own unworthiness, were also the means of attracting the attention of the persons that were seated in the coach.

Now the occupants of the carriage had no notion whatever of the peril which they had just passed through, but they could hear very plainly the crackling of O'Toole's whip as it reverberated on the shoulders of the offending boors, and the volume of O'Toole's oathing as it thundered about their ears, and the noise was so unexpected and so astonishing that it provoked Wogan to thrust his head out of the carriage window and bawl to O'Toole to know what he would be at, asking him sharply if he knew the respect that was due to the lady whom they escorted. To which poor O'Toole answered in a broken voice, bubbling with contrition, and promising explanation later.

At the next place for changing horses O'Toole, haggard with his emotions, came to Wogan and told

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him what had happened. Wogan, who had never before seen the good giant so distressed, and who was touched to the heart by the simplicity of his tale and the working of his countenance, naturally accorded him, on behalf of the Princess, a complete forgiveness, and clasped his hand with all the ardor of a comradeship which had just received a new impulse of strength. O'Toole assured Wogan that if his rage had not been tempered to suavity by his sense of respect for the presence of the Princess he would never have limited himself to lashing and cursing the peccant rascals, but would have very frankly blown their brains out.

There were perils other than accidents that the refugees had to fear. Although Wogan was under the belief that his little party had made too early a start and journeyed too rapidly thereafter to be in fear of any pursuit in force, he very seriously apprehended and dreaded the appearance of some courier dispatched from Innsbruck to the Governor of Trent or the Governor of Roveredo, two imperial towns through which they were obliged to pass, carrying orders to arrest the Princess and her little company. He had no means of guessing by what time the alarm might have been given at Innsbruck, but he could not help recognizing that some unforeseen accident might easily precipitate discovery, and that a promptly dispatched messenger, travelling at top speed, might in such a case be very presently upon their heels.

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To guard against this danger, the greatest, as he then imagined, which they had now to fear, he gave orders that Misset and O'Toole should keep a post's distance behind the rest of the party and keep a sharp lookout for a possible courier. If they encountered him their instructions were by hook or by crook to get his papers from him, and to keep him from continuing his journey by killing his horse and leaving the man securely tied in a ditch by the highway, they being provided with cords for this very purpose. They were not, however, so Wogan very strictly enjoined, to kill the man or even to do him serious injury, if they could possibly avoid such extreme measures. Of course, however, in the last resort consideration for the safety of the Princess was to overrule all scruples.

Thus instructed, O'Toole and Misset fell behind, and consoled themselves for their separation from their main body by offering themselves such good cheer as the inns or posting-houses that they found on their road could afford. It was at one of these in a little village called Wellishmile that fortune favored them by delivering him they sought into their hands. The pair were seated at table in the single room of the inn, at two o'clock of a raw morning, making ready to enjoy the hot supper they had ordered, when they heard a noise outside and presently afterward there lurched into the room a man all bespattered with mud, that cursed and swore horribly, a man whom they guessed at once

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to be the courier from Innspruck, whom it was their business to intercept. The fellow was vomiting imprecations upon the condition of the road and the condition of the post-horses; and, indeed, he was scarcely to be blamed for his rage, considering the state of the highway and the exhausted case of the poor relays of horses that had been compelled to do double duty already, thanks to the passage of so many travellers.

As soon as Misset and O'Toole had marked their man they set to work, as O'Toole afterward expressed it, to circumnavigate him. Indeed, the task presented no great difficulty. The poor devil was tired out; he had been thrown from his saddle perhaps half a dozen times by the flounderings of his jaded mounts; he was sore all over from his bruises; and to crown all he was simply dying of thirst. To such a man in such a condition it was easy enough for Misset and O'Toole to prove themselves the friends in need, and in a few minutes all three were seated round the same table sharing the repast which the two soldiers had been prompt to offer to share with the new-comer.

Now Misset, that remembered with admiration and approval the trick which Wogan had played upon that solemn Briton, Sir Timothy Wynstock, had provided himself for the occasion with a pocket-flask that was filled to the stopper with a double Strassbourg brandy that was no gentler than raw spirit. While the jaded courier was bewailing his

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case to O'Toole, Misset took the opportunity to empty his flask into an earthenware jug that stood upon the sideboard, which jug he, pretending that it carried no other than common potable water, conveyed to the supper-table.

Now, when the courier in his thirst was for filling himself out a glass of the wine that the inn provided, Misset laid his hand upon the flagon and stayed him, protesting that the liquor was too heady for a tired man to drink neat. As he spoke he filled out half a glass of the wine and straightway tempered it by filling to the brim with the fiery contents of the jug. The courier, who guessed nothing of the manoeuvre, lifted the mixture to his lips avidly and emptied the glass at a single draught. The fierce blend made him cough and gasp, and as he sat down his glass, with the tears streaming from his eyes, and spluttered out staggering asseverances that the liquor was indeed strong, he was already well-nigh as drunk as an owl.

However, in gratitude to his hosts, he endeavored to eat of the victuals they offered him, and because of his condition he readily accepted the relays of fluid with which they plied him, for the poor devil's thirst only increased with each seasoned draught. As he quaffed, his wisdom weakened and his tongue loosened, and in reply to a casual question of O'Toole's as to the latest news from Innspruck, he told them that the Princess Clementina had been carried off by a band of brigands, and that he was

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riding posthaste to the Governor of Trent with a message from General Heister ordering him to arrest the bandits and have them all flayed alive.

As he came to this point in his confused narrative the angry messenger plucked his packet from his pocket and flung it furiously upon the table. Even as he did so the potency of the devil's elixir so dexterously brewed for him by Misset quite overcame his senses, and his fuddled head dropped like a log of wood upon the table and lay there helpless. His obliging hosts immediately pounced upon the packet, and without a moment's delay thrust it into the hottest heart of the fire that was burning upon the hearth. When the last ashes were consumed, O'Toole and Misset, between them, conveyed the helpless messenger to his bed, where they placed him and left him so happily steeped in wine and strong waters that, as it proved, he could neither stir nor speak for four-and-twenty hours afterward.

This was the ingenious trick by means of which the Chevalier Charles Wogan, with the aid of his faithful friends, contrived to baffle the fury of General Heister. This was the ingenious trick which Mr. Davenant, the representative of the Elector of Hanover to the States of Italy, warped into an accusation against the Chevalier of murdering five or six couriers on the highroad between Innspruck and Trent. This Davenant presented a memorial to the Senate of the Republic of Genoa, where the Chevalier then happened to be, waiting for a wind

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to carry him to Spain, but the Genoese Senate treated the ridiculous accusation and preposterous demand with the contempt which both they and their utterer deserved.

Such were the most eminent of the various adventures that befell the fugitives on their way through the dominions of the Emperor. Others, annoying and embarrassing, had to be endured, but seem too trivial for formal enumeration. When O'Toole and Misset, joining their party beyond Trent, informed Wogan of the successful result of their interview with the courier from Innspruck, Wogan rubbed his hands and congratulated himself that the worst of the ticklish business was over and done with. Which only shows how the wisest and the wariest of campaigners may be misled.

XVIII

WOGAN'S DIPLOMACY

IT was not very long before the Princess, beginning to grow accustomed to the fact of her escape, seemed to find that the circumstances round her, strange and unexpected as they were, were not sufficiently enthralling to command all her attention. She, therefore, entreated the Chevalier, whom, as leader of the expedition, she was pleased to regard as her prime minister, to find some means of diverting her leisure. Then, before she allowed him time to make any suggestion, she ordered him to tell her the whole history of the enterprise which had so far resulted in gaining her her freedom. With this request Wogan complied willingly enough, as although the enterprise had been schemed and carried out by him he was able to narrate its evolutions without making himself seem too important in the matter.

He told her how his earliest and one of his greatest difficulties had been to persuade her father, Prince James Sobieski, to give his consent to Wogan's scheme of evasion. That consent Wogan knew to be essential, for without it he could not

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hope to persuade the Princess to make the attempt, or, even if he did so persuade her, to justify the attempt in the eyes of the world.

Here the Princess interrupted him to assure him that she would have gone to her dear Sovereign Lord King James quite regardless of the fact that her father had withheld his permission.

Wogan laughed and shook his head and went on with his story. He told her how he had argued with the Prince all through a long afternoon and evening without producing apparently the slightest effect upon the Prince's stubborn resolve. To begin with, the Prince declared that he was not willing to make himself ridiculous in the eyes of the world by giving his consent to a project which did not appear to have the faintest chance of success. But even if the project did prove to be successful, and did give the Princess her liberty, he did not at all relish the prospect of seeing his daughter go gypsying across Europe after a landless prince that was powerless to avenge the insults that had been heaped on him and his bride-elect by the Emperor. In a word, though he assured Wogan that if he were to entertain the crazy scheme at all he would cheerfully confide Clementina to his care, he concluded that this was not a time for such Don-Quixotisms. Thus, when the pair parted at night, though they parted upon good terms, for the Prince had always shown the greatest liking for and kindness to Wogan, Wogan's attempt seemed as hopeless as ever.

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As Wogan paused in his story to give dramatic effect to the difficulty in which he found himself, the Princess eagerly encouraged him to proceed, declaring that she was burning to know how he had overcome her father's obstinacy.

Wogan went on to say that on the following morning, which happened to be the first day of the year 1719, his Highness the Prince was good enough to send him, Wogan, by the hands of his treasurer, as a New-Year's gift, a remarkably handsome snuff-box, with a request that he would accept it as a token of the Prince's good-will.

This snuff-box was made of a single turquoise set in gold, and had been found by King John, Prince James Sobieski's father, in the tent of the Grand Vizier on the day of the famous battle of Vienna. It was unique in its kind and of incalculable value, so that the most experienced jewellers of Augsburg could not guess at its proper price. Wogan immediately, and with much dignity, though with the utmost respect, begged to be allowed to return the proffered gift, as he did not, he considered, think it right that he who was acting on his royal master's business should consent to receive so costly a gift from his Highness at a time when he, Wogan, had so completely failed to carry out his master's wishes to gain the Prince's consent to what must needs prove his master's happiness. In vain did the Prince's treasurer press Wogan to accept his master's gift. Wogan was politely obdurate, and the treas-

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urer had to return to his master with the Grand Vizier's snuff-box and the news of Wogan's refusal.

Many princes might have been offended by this show of independence, but it happened that Wogan had calculated not unhappily upon the nature of the Prince with whom he was dealing. Sobieski was favorably impressed by Wogan's action, so favorably impressed that he immediately invited him to dinner—the pair being alone together. After the dinner he not only insisted upon Wogan keeping the pretty toy, but avowed that he had completely changed his attitude toward the whole matter they had been discussing. He was so delighted by Wogan's action that he consented to sanction the enterprise that Wogan had planned.

The Princess congratulated her companion upon having so happily got over what seemed to be so great an obstacle. Wogan thereupon assured her that this was only the beginning of troubles, the first shoot, as it were, of a whole crop of difficulties.

The next and perhaps the greatest of the dangers that threatened the expedition in the beginning was again due to the action of Prince James Sobieski. Wogan was anxious to obtain certain passports from the court of Vienna for Milan, or some other Italian town; which would greatly facilitate his undertaking. He, therefore, questioned the Prince as to whether it were at all possible that such passports could be obtained. The Prince promised to find out what Wogan wished, but to Wogan's dis-

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may he proceeded to find out in the most straightforward, not to say infantile, fashion. There was a Viennese gentleman at the Prince's court, a certain Baron d'Echersberg, one that, having failed to make his way in the greater world of Austria, was now seeking for success in a more limited sphere of action. The Prince had a considerable regard for this gentleman, enjoyed much of his company, and showed him no little favor. To Wogan's dismay the Prince Sobieski immediately summoned this gentleman to his presence from the adjoining ante-chamber, where he happened to be, and asked him point blank if such passports as Wogan wished for could be easily obtained, or juggled out of the court of Vienna, as they would greatly aid his plans for the evasion of his daughter Clementina from Innspruck.

All this the honest Prince explained to his dear Baron with as cheerful a heedlessness as if he were informing him that his daughter had a mind to acquire a new kind of lapdog, or meditated some important change in the dressing of her hair. Here was a scheme whose only chance of success depended upon its being kept secret to the fewest number of persons possible being aired by the good, inconsequential Prince as carelessly as if it were of no more importance than a piece of linen flung upon a line to dry on a windy day, with all the passing world to take note of.

It seemed to Wogan as if the bright sunlight and

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the bright room had suddenly changed to darkness and ruin by some earth-shaking calamity, so completely did he feel that the folly of the Prince had totally destroyed all the elaborate schemes he had been at such pains to construct. The Viennese gentleman would naturally be made suspicious, would naturally communicate his suspicions to the imperial court. The intentions of the conspirators would be guessed at, if not actually discovered, and the enterprise practically rendered hopeless.

The Austrian gentleman, however, acted as if he were not at all surprised by this show of confidence. He answered the Prince frankly enough that such passports were very difficult indeed to obtain, and that the court of Vienna, always suspicious of such requests in time of peace, would certainly take alarm if they came from any person supposed to be friendly to the interests of his Highness. The Baron thereupon argued that it would be unwise for him personally to make the attempt, as he was known to be devoted to Prince Sobieski, and indignant at the affront which had been offered him. He further urged that the less sureties they sought the less suspicions they would arouse, and he suggested that a simple *billet de santé*, which was readily allowed to all who asked for it, would meet the needs of the case.

His manner to the Prince was quite friendly and sympathetic, but Wogan was diplomatist enough to know how little this might mean, and in his heart

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he cursed the Prince for his folly, though he did not, of course, permit any expression of his indignation or his despair to show itself on his countenance. He immediately realized that the Baron must be dealt with instantly and won over to his party, or that the cherished plan of evasion must be abandoned.

Luckily, however, for Wogan, it was ever part and parcel of his happy-go-lucky, practical philosophy of existence that whenever any affair seemed to be at its very worst, it was very probably well on its way to being bettered. The Prince James Sobieski had chosen to be loose-tongued, foolish beyond praise; nothing in the world could alter that fact or make his Highness's spoken words unsaid or unheard. The Prince had blundered beyond repairing; he had confided the priceless secret to a new confidant. The one and only thing to be done in this ugly emergency was to make that same confidant powerless to do all or any of the harm of which he had been so foolishly rendered capable.

Wogan was quick to gauge the character of those with whom he came in contact, and he believed that he had reckoned up his friend the Baron pretty accurately. He saw in him an ambitious man that had not the talents to satisfy his ambitions, a man that had drifted from a great court to a petty court, and that was still consumed with a sense of his own importance. It was Wogan's belief that such a one should be laid siege to briskly, and he set to work at

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once. He began his task with an Irish soldier's confidence in the efficacy of good wine. He invited the Baron to a supper in his apartments, where he regaled him with some specially excellent old Tokay that had been a present to Wogan from the Prince, and that had not its better in any princely cellar in Europe.

The Baron drank generously of the generous vintage. The good wine warmed his heart and thawed his reserve. Wogan plied him briskly, filling and filling again with great rapidity and talking all the while very volubly and earnestly about the affairs of Europe in general, and the affairs of his master, King James the Third, in particular. He professed to speak with perfect candor to the Baron, assuring him that he trusted him implicitly, and had therefore no fear of laying bare the inmost secrets of the Stuart diplomacy.

The Baron, vastly flattered by all these confidences, grew gayer and gayer, more amiable and yet more amiable, and assured his host that he might rely entirely upon his, the Baron's, discretion. Then Wogan played his chief card dramatically. Lowering his voice he confided to the Baron that one of the missions on which he was intrusted by his master was to find a gentleman of reputation and discretion, a German by choice for the better diversion of suspicion, who might serve to represent King James's interests at the court of Sweden.

The choice of such an ambassador, Wogan de-

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clared—having only invented the embassy that afternoon—was left entirely to him, and he begged to ask if there were anything in such an appointment which might be at all pleasing to a man of the Baron's position and abilities. Incidentally, as a matter of relatively little importance, he added that the post, besides the diplomatic dignity it afforded, would be one of the best remunerated of any that were in the disposition of the Stuart King. Which was true enough in a sense, but not exactly in the sense in which it was intended that the Baron should understand the matter.

The Baron, his head humming with Tokay and the flow of Wogan's eloquence, was delighted at the proposal. His vanity was flattered, his conviction of his own abilities confirmed. He saw himself entering London in a triumphal chariot with the George about his neck and the Garter at his knee. He pledged his new master in a fresh bumper, and assured Wogan that King James had no more zealous or faithful adherent. He cheerfully drew up and signed a paper embodying the main features of their conversation as a proof of their unchangeable alliance and friendship. This done, more Tokay followed, after which Wogan assisted the Baron to his bedroom and his bed, and retired to his own with the serene satisfaction of one that has accomplished a good night's work. The Baron's silence, the Baron's secrecy, was secured for the present, and Wogan could continue his scheme without fear.

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The Princess was vastly entertained by this account of Wogan's diplomatic methods. "But I think," said she, "you would not have got off so easily if you had been forced to deal with a woman instead of a man."

Wogan smiled significantly at this challenging speech, but he preserved a provoking silence for a while, until the Princess, guessing that something of moment lay behind his reserve, commanded him to speak.

"Why, madam," Wogan replied, "if you must needs know, there was a woman at Ohlau that gave me indeed a great deal of trouble."

The Princess begged him to tell her all about it, and Wogan did his best to comply.

To deal with the German Baron had been easy enough, but there was a German lady, the Countess of Berg, that was like to prove a more difficult antagonist. She was a young and beautiful woman that was a great friend of a great prince, and that glittered at the court of Ohlau no less by her wit than by her beauty. She had a sister that was in the service of the Dowager Princess Sobieski, and a brother that was Governor of Breslau under the Emperor.

It was plain to Wogan from the beginning that the charming Countess had her suspicions as to the reasons of his visit to Prince James Sobieski. He was the more convinced of this through the pains the lady took to mask her suspicions and to mani-

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fest toward himself the most amiable of intentions. She was incessant in demanding the pleasure of his company; she was persistent in plying him with assurances of her sympathy with the exiled House of Stuart in all its tragic history. Especially she displayed a great tenderness over the misfortunes of Mary Stuart, that was King James the Third's great-great-grandmother, and loudly expressed the hope that the sorrows of the race might shortly end. As she was earnest in her show of affection for the line, so she was assiduous in her endeavors to induce Wogan to respond candidly to her display of interest.

Wogan carried himself warily, was judiciously chary of expressing political opinions, and showed as much enthusiasm for the Stuart cause as was to be expected in an Irish soldier and Catholic, but no more. As, however, he was far from feeling sure that he had succeeded in lulling the pretty lady's suspicions, he was very careful when the time came for him to take his departure from Ohlau to take such steps as might throw her off the scent. He announced that he was going to Prague, on his way to Italy for the carnival, and he spoke often and loudly of the pleasure he expected to find from a sojourn of several days in one of the most beautiful cities of Europe.

On the appointed day he took his farewells of all his friends and enemies of Ohlau—from the weak and kindly Prince to the beautiful Countess—and

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started bravely and gayly for the city of Prague. But he had not travelled very far before he gave the order to turn his horses' heads, and he concluded his journey under a feigned name in Vienna. There he learned later the wisdom of the course he had pursued, for his fair foe had indeed sent a letter to her brother at Breslau, which is only four leagues from Ohlau, informing him that an Englishman named the Chevalier Warner—for that was the name by which Wogan went in Ohlau—was an agent of the Stuart Pretender, and urging him to order the Governor of Prague to arrest him and hold him a prisoner until instructions could come from the Austrian court.

Clementina congratulated Wogan on his success in baffling the machinations of the fair intriguer, and asked if he had nothing further to relate of his experiences at Ohlau. Wogan, cudgelling his memory, admitted that there was a moment just before he took his departure from Ohlau when his spirits, that had been incessantly exalted and depressed by the vacillations of the Prince, suddenly leaped very high. Wogan believed himself to be on the point of inaugurating a European war in the interests of his royal master. The Tsar of Russia, being very much displeased with the Austrian Cæsar, was willing, and even anxious, to make the Innsbruck imprisonment an occasion for taking up arms. He saw his way to an alliance between himself and Sweden, and another great prince who should be

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nameless, with England as represented by King James, which should be opposed to the alliance manufactured by the ministers of the Elector of Hanover. All he needed in order to declare war was the agreement of the Prince James Sobieski to join the enterprise and so to win back his kingdom.

Through all an exciting evening the Prince and Wogan discussed the situation. The Prince seemed delighted at the prospect of so signally avenging the insult afforded to his house and of regaining the kingdom that was his by right. Wogan went to bed in an ecstasy, with all the drums of Europe dinning in his ears. He woke to a day of blank and bitter disappointment. The Prince immediately that he saw him proved to have changed his purpose entirely in the course of a night. His natural irresolution triumphed over his ambition, and nothing that Wogan could say could stir him. The Prince declared that if he had a son and heir the case would be different, but as he had only daughters, there would be no one to succeed him on the throne, and it was not worth while plunging Europe into strife for the sake of such few years of royalty as a victorious result might afford him. To this point he stood, and would not be persuaded otherwise; and Wogan left him, wishing very heartily that when it pleased Heaven to make men kings it always endowed them with the qualities of kingship.

XIX

MORE TALES BY THE WAY

NATURALLY Wogan did not confess to Clementina his most intimate opinion of her princely father. He did no more than express a polite regret that the very natural scruples of the honorable Sobieski had prevented him, Wogan, from plunging the better part of Europe into the throes of warfare, and thereby affording him the only occupation which he desired or was able to understand. Soldiering had been Wogan's business from his boyhood; indeed, it might be said from his babyhood, for he was born in days of battle; and he was never, to the end of his adventurous life, able to realize that there were other occupations for a gentleman to follow. He was indifferently aware that a workaday world must needs be provided with tinkers and tailors, millers and builders, merchants and lawyers, and all the rest of the unimportant necessary fools who help to pay the expenses of the big wars that make ambition virtue. He, also as a soldier, saw a clearer need for vintners, armorers, manufacturers of playing-cards, casters of ordnance, forgers of bayonets, and all other per-

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sons whose labor contributes to make the world a universal camp, bivouac, battlefield, Walhalla.

Such being his simple scheme of life—if one can conceive of him as seriously elaborating a scheme of life or ever doing other than following out his philosophy of taking life as it came with a smiling face—it was naturally pleasing to him to read in the eyes of the Princess Clementina that she shared his thoughts. She was a much better Sobieski than her father; she would have cheerfully set Europe ablaze and the world by the ears to regain the throne that she believed to be hers, or to advance the cause of the unhappy gentleman whom it was her privilege to wed. So she applauded Wogan's narrative with shining eyes, burning cheeks, parted panting lips, and heaving bosom, as became the daughter of a warlike race.

And Wogan, gallant, straightforward soldier that he was, grew more and more hopelessly and helplessly certain that there was nothing so agreeable in all the wide world as the approval of the Princess Clementina, as the interest of the Princess Clementina, as the smiles of the Princess Clementina. He found himself wishing that the journey would last forever, wishing that Bologna was as far off as the North Pole, wishing wicked, pitiful, imbecile wishes that made him feel as he knew he would feel if at some state banquet he suddenly discovered himself to be shamefully overtaken with wine.

Being a man and a gentleman, he was confident

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that nothing of his magnificent idiotic secret had made its way outside the confines of his heart into the porch of his mouth and the windows of his eyes. What he knew of himself he was steadfastly sure that no one else knew, and to his own mind he carried himself, from first to last, with a gay carelessness that left nothing to be desired. It was his business, he assured himself, to amuse the Princess, and so he strove to amuse her, and told her, with a better grace than he knew, all that he had to tell, and incidentally all that she desired to be told.

When Wogan had exhausted his stock of reminiscences of the court of Ohlau and its intrigues, Clementina showed a lively interest in all that concerned her future husband's fortunes, and more especially in his attempt some years earlier to win the crown of England by force of arms. When she learned that Wogan had himself taken part in the Fifteen, she plied him with endless questions, which he, for his part, answered very readily and very fully, except in so far as his own exploits were concerned, of which he was fain to say little or nothing. But the Princess was not to be so put off, and she insisted in obtaining from him a particular account of his share in the battle of Preston, and of the misfortunes that followed him thereafter which led to his captivity in Newgate, where he lay in great peril of his life. She was much diverted by his account of his escape from the prison, which she

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made him relate at length not once only, but several times, listening to it with the delight that a child has in hearing a familiar tale, and like a child correcting the narrator if he left out a single point that had been told on a previous occasion.

Having made an end of his own adventures, Wogan sought to interest the Princess in the doings of one Michel Vesozzi, that was in King James's service, and told her the part he had played in the evasion of my Lord Nithsdale from the Tower. It seemed that this story had not before reached her Highness's ears, wherefore Wogan, with greater freedom and length, seeing that the matter did not concern himself, told her the whole of that romantic tale of the high-hearted devotion of the fair Lady Nithsdale for her imprisoned lord, which led her, after failing to obtain any show of clemency from the Elector of Hanover, to gain access to her husband in his dungeon. There she changed clothes with him, and my lord made his escape from the Tower in his wife's gown, while the brave lady remained behind and took his place.

Clementina applauded eagerly the courage and devotion of so honorable a lady, and was eager to know what fate befell her in consequence of her daring. Wogan, glad to be able to reassure her, told her that though the Elector of Hanover was very furious when he heard of my Lord Nithsdale's escape, he either was not willing, or was not suffered by his ministers, to inflict any further punishment

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upon Lady Nithsdale than a brief period of confinement, after which she was suffered to go free and rejoin her husband abroad. Clementina declared, with tears in her eyes, that she thought Lady Nithsdale must be one of the most wonderful women in the world, and one whom she would gladly resemble in fortitude and daring. Wogan felt very convinced that the fair Princess would risk as much for any man to whom she gave her heart, and, judging by the composure of her carriage under the trying conditions of her present position, he believed her capable of doing as great a deed and accomplishing it as successfully, and he assured himself with vehemence that he rejoiced in his heart at the thought that his royal master was about to receive a spouse worthy of him.

Even Wogan's experiences on his journey through the world, and Wogan's intimate knowledge of the men and affairs of the ever-glorious Fifteen, could scarcely be relied upon to amuse indefinitely a princess that was too old to be diverted by the relation of fairy tales. Happily, however, there was another means of making the heavy time pass lightly. Almost from the beginning of the journey the fair Princess was bitten with a desire to learn English, and, of course, must needs have Wogan for her teacher. She wished, she said, to be able to speak to her dear lord and husband in his own tongue and the tongue of those whom he ought by rights to govern. Though Wogan assured her that

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his Majesty spoke a most excellent French, still the young lady was not to be dissuaded, and Wogan had perforce to set about his unexpected task. There were many pretty little English phrases that Clementina was eager to make herself mistress of, such as "my humble duty to your Majesty," and "I love you, my dear lord," and the like, all of which Wogan repeated to her again and again, until they became impressed upon her memory and she could reproduce them by herself.

Wogan sometimes thought, with a smile, in the course of these lessons, that it was inevitable, seeing who was her tutor, that the little Princess would something astonish her husband by speaking an English that was marked with a very characteristic Kildare accent. He thought, too, that the enemies of his master who resented so much his trust in the Irish Catholic gentlemen who were devoted to him would discover a new reason for faultfinding in the fact that the Prince's Polish bride spoke English like an Irishwoman. But there were other disadvantages in these English lessons which Wogan found less provocative of mirth, though of these the Princess probably was not aware.

XX

THE GREAT MISHAP

IN this wise the time slipped by, profitably or unprofitably, until at last Wogan was able to assure the Princess and his companions that they were indeed very near at hand to the territories of the States of Venice. Once the frontier line was passed the little party would be, theoretically at least, in safety, and Wogan hoped with good reason that they would be practically in safety as well. For he relied confidently upon the neighborhood of the worthy Swedish gentleman of fortune, the Baron of Winquitz, and his hunting-party, who would be numerous enough to render unavailing any rash, belated attempt at capture.

It was just when all were congratulating themselves and one another upon the successful issue of their enterprise that the great mishap took place. They had got well through Reveredo, the last garrison town belonging to the Emperor, after encountering and surmounting the usual difficulties with regard to relays of post-horses. Fresh cattle were not to be had. Their predecessors on the post-road here, as elsewhere on their journey, secured all

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the fresh beasts that were obtainable. All they could do was, with the aid of a liberal use of palm-oil, to persuade the postilion to let them continue their journey with the same wearied animals that had carried them to Reveredo. This being accomplished, the party pushed on, as swiftly as it might, toward the frontier and freedom.

When Reveredo was so far out of sight and out of mind as to seem a thing of the infinite past, and the growing dimness of the waning day began to arouse thoughts of the comfort of being at ease by nightfall within Venetian territory, it pleased those of the Princess's gentlemen as were in the coach with her—Wogan, namely, and Gaydon—to sing hallelujahs in honor of their happy passage through an enemy's country, and especially to shower plaudits upon the goodness of their coach that had held out so stoutly against so many mountains, rocks, and precipices. While the two soldiers were thus merry and cheerful, the Princess, reproving them playfully, declared that it was not as yet time to sing songs of victory. "We are not yet," so she said, "so near to our journey's end as to reckon that we are out of danger. Stay your rejoicings until we are clear of all our dangers. We have a great way yet to go."

Now she had not long uttered these words, and Wogan and Gaydon were still reasoning with the Princess upon her want of faith in being out of danger, reasons which we have it on good authority

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that they expressed in a fine laconic style, when the great mishap came to pass. Even as they were talking their talk was interrupted by a sudden sound of snapping wood, followed by a lurching of the coach that flung all its occupants in a confused heap together. When they scrambled out they soon found what had happened. The axletree of the vehicle had broken at one end, and there lay their carriage on the lonely road in the deepening twilight as helpless as a waterlogged ship. The one satisfactory feature of the adventure was that no one in the carriage had been hurt, and especially that the Princess had not been affected by the accident, which she took as gayly as if it had been a wholly enjoyable chance.

It greatly distressed Wogan that the coach should have come to grief just at that spot, for if it had held together a little longer they would have passed the frontier line that separated the dominion of the Emperor from the States of Venice. It was, therefore, with the greatest energy that he mounted and rode back to the latest village through which they had passed. There he endeavored to stimulate the sleepy-witted peasants of the place to exertions that were wholly foreign to their natures. By a judicious blend of persuasions and promises, however, he succeeded in getting a certain number of them to work with something like alacrity in assisting them in their difficulty.

A small body of the villagers proceeded to the

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scene of the accident, where, by lending the support of their arms and shoulders to the damaged vehicle, they succeeded in enabling it to be drawn back at a slow rate to the village, with the Princess and Mistress Misset inside it, and Gaydon, Misset, and O'Toole acting as escort. Such accommodation as the village could offer to the ladies was wretched in the extreme, but even if it had been better than it was Wogan would have been anxious, if it were at all possible, to proceed on the journey, so as to get across the frontier, a wish which he knew would be vigorously shared by the Princess. It was resolved, therefore, if they could find any means of transport, to push on and have the coach, which it was soon found could not possibly be repaired and made fit for travel until the next day, sent after them to their first resting-place within the territory of the States of Venice.

To this end Wogan made inquiries as to the existence of any other wheeled vehicle in the village, and found that the place boasted a kind of cart which the peasants called a *carriole*, and which, after some argument, they agreed to lend to Wogan at an exorbitant hire. Wogan's intention was to employ two of the horses that had driven the coach, and that were now standing useless, for his new vehicle, but here he encountered a difficulty in the obstinacy of the driver, who was very reluctant to let his animals do any further work, and who expressed considerable surprise at the unnecessary haste that

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Wogan was inflicting upon the tired ladies he was escorting. The production, however, of Wogan's purse and the passage of a certain number of shining coins from it into the palm of the grumbler's hand settled the matter, and Wogan was able to his great satisfaction to inform the Princess that if she were willing to accept the use of a very clumsy vehicle she might proceed a few stages farther on her journey and pass from the dominion of the Emperor into the jurisdiction of another power.

The Princess was delighted at the suggestion. She expressed no alarm at the ungainly appearance of the vehicle; indeed, had it been a triumphant chariot she could not have welcomed it with prettier expressions of approval. Accordingly, the party with all promptitude transferred the bulk of their belongings from the old vehicle into the new; the Princess and Mistress Misset climbed into the cart, and with Wogan and Gaydon on one side and their companions on the other, the fugitives made their way slowly enough along the road toward the place of safety. After a little while they came to a great wall, and when they were past it Wogan came to a halt and, taking off his hat, saluted the Princess very gravely. "Madam," he said, "I thank Heaven that we have come so far, for this wall marks the division between the territories of your enemy, the Emperor, and the States of the Republic of Venice, that is like to prove your friend."

The Princess sprang to her feet in the car and

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clapped her hands gayly, and the whole party were so elated that they laughed and sang and shouted like so many children newly given a holiday. It was then Wogan's intention to push on as far as the nearest village, which was some miles off, and there await the coming of the mended coach, but the ill-luck that had caused them so many misadventures hitherto had yet another prank to play.

As the adventurers were going slowly along, the pin of one of the wheels dropped unnoticed upon the road, and after a few further revolutions the wheel quitted its axle altogether, letting the carriage come to earth somewhat abruptly. Luckily the pace at which they were going had been a slow one, and luckily, also, the horses did not take fright at the mischance, but stood quietly still when Wogan's companions checked them, while Wogan assisted the Princess and Mistress Misset, who were neither of them hurt, to escape from their awkward position. Mistress Misset, indeed, looked a little alarmed, but the Princess Clementina laughed as heartily as if falling down with a country cart were the best jest in the world.

Yet the delay was troublesome enough. The village for which they were aiming was far beyond walking distance for the Princess and Mistress Misset, and the injury to the carriage was beyond the power of Wogan or his companions to repair. While Wogan was considering the advisability of proposing to carry the ladies riding pillion on their

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horses for the rest of the distance the Princess caught him by the arm and pointed to some masses of masonry revealing themselves amid the trees that clothed the sides of a neighboring hill. "Yonder seems to be some kind of habitation," she said. "Might we not seek shelter there until assistance can come to us, now that we are within friendly territory?"

The suggestion appeared feasible, and Wogan dispatched Gaydon to mount the slope and reconnoitre the ground. Gaydon came back presently with the information that what they saw were the ruins of an old castle which still contained some rooms that might, with the aid of what they bore with them in the carriage, be made habitable for the night. The Princess, who had not been attracted by the thought of riding, seemed delighted at the idea of taking shelter in so romantic a spot, and Mistress Misset, who was far more easily fatigued than Clementina, was plainly relieved at the prospect of immediate repose. The little party, therefore, made their way slowly up the somewhat steep incline, Wogan congratulating himself the while that they were in Venetian territory and safe now from pursuit. His congratulations were premature.

The spot which the Princess had discovered was, as they learned later, called Castel-Falcone, and had been in its day a stately stronghold. But having been taken and destroyed in one of the many

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wars that had devastated Italy, it had never been rebuilt and had been suffered gradually to fall into ruin. It still possessed, however, certain rooms that were sufficiently intact to afford protection from wind and weather, and the place would have made a pleasant enough refuge under happier conditions, but to people who were flying, if not for their lives, at least for their liberty, any compulsory halting place, had it been in a spot as fair as the Vale of Tempe, would necessarily have possessed but few attractions. Wogan, however, with his habitual philosophy of cheerfulness, treated the halt as if it were a welcome episode, and as for the Princess her spirits seemed to mount with each successive misadventure. She was blithely delighted with the place, and eager to appreciate its beauties, so far as they were to be discerned at that late hour by the light of some torches which they carried with them, and which served fitfully to illuminate the gaunt walls.

The ruins of the old castle stood on a considerable eminence above the mountain road, and the sides of the hill were thickly clothed with trees, which in those days of early spring were showing their greenness at its freshest. From the summit a very delightful stretch of country was visible by daylight, appealing to the painter and the poet in every spectator, and unmarked as far as the sight would reach by any signs of human habitation. The beauty of the place was not, however, its main

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recommendation in the minds of the more practical of the party. Since a whimsical destiny had decided that the cart must break down at a spot many miles distant from the nearest village, it was fortunate, at least, that the place where the accident occurred afforded such an opportunity of shelter as was offered by the ruined walls of the ancient castle.

Although most of the upper part had long since disappeared, and though the great space that had once been the banqueting hall had now no other roof than the heavens, there were by good fortune a few smaller rooms that were in a more habitable condition. In one of these that still boasted a roof to shelter its occupants from the elements Wogan installed the Princess and Mistress Misset, constructing rough couches for them from the cushions that had been transferred from the coach to the carriage, and effecting a kind of privacy by masking the spaces where doors had once been by hanging riding-cloaks on lines in lieu of curtains. The party had some provisions with them, and they ate and drank merrily enough, congratulating themselves time and again on being at last in safety. As all were very tired, however, the somewhat fictitious revelry did not last very long. The two women retired to the room that had been arranged for them, and the men took it in turns to sleep and watch till dawn. Under such conditions the adventurers passed the night.

XXI

A PERILOUS PARLEY

FOR Wogan the night was one of little sleep and much wakefulness. Like the pious Æneas, he was revolving many cares in his mind. The interruption to their journey, though it might have happened at a worse time and in a worse place, was still to be considered as very unfortunate. The fugitives were indeed geographically and technically within the jurisdiction of the States of Venice, and no Austrian writ had the right to run there, but Wogan knew very well, as Misset had reminded him in their talk at the "Blue Moon," that with Austria might would mean right, and that the question of a few yards or a few miles on the wrong side of the frontier line would never trouble the conscience of an Austrian official that was desirous of winning the approval of Cæsar.

It was true that O'Toole and Misset had succeeded in silencing one courier that had overtaken them; but that one courier might be the herald of many, and that one courier, when he came to his senses, would in any case be sure to proceed to Trent and there tell his story of the events at Inns-

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pruck, and of what had befallen him at the little village where his papers had been stolen from him. In such a case it was scarcely to be doubted that the Austrian Governor of Trent would organize an immediate pursuit which, under the conditions caused by the unlucky delay, might mean disaster for their plans.

Wogan's hopes, therefore, lay first in the immediate reparation of their travelling coach, and next in the speedy arrival of the Baron of Winkitz with his seeming hunting-party. As to the Baron, however, Wogan entertained misgivings. He did not know enough of the man to rely confidently upon his powers of keeping promise and tryst, and he was, moreover, troubled by a further thought: He had not been able, naturally, to fix any decided and positive date for the time of his expected arrival in the States of Venice. As a matter of fact, his desperate expedition had been accomplished with greater speed than he had anticipated; so that it was quite conceivable that even if the Baron had duly organized his escort he might not yet be anywhere near the place where Wogan and his companions were now stranded. Anxiously, therefore, Wogan waited for the dawn.

Dawn revealed to Wogan a clearer view of his surroundings than he had been able to obtain on the previous night. The open space where he and his three friends had encamped, and that had been in old days the stately hall of Castel-Falcone, was

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now a roofless and for the most part a wall-less ruin. At one end, indeed, a portion of the old castle remained in a state of tolerable preservation, and it was here that Wogan had discovered the room which, with a little pains, had been made into a tolerable sleeping apartment for Clementina and Mistress Misset. On the side which overlooked the country through which they had just travelled nothing remained but a portion of the pillared framework of a great window, whose crumbling bulk, standing so gauntly forth, seemed as if it were kept in its place by some supernatural agency that restrained it miraculously from toppling over and plunging in destruction down the hillside.

For the four men their bivouac in the banquet-hall of Castel-Falcone had been no better and no worse than if they had lain in the free fields; but they were used to such open-air encampments, and had slept in the deserted place with a soldier's zest that found them fresh and ready for the new day's business. That business began at once.

With the earliest morning the four men were active in their efforts to repair the disaster of the previous day. Wogan remained on guard at Castel-Falcone while Misset, Gaydon, and O'Toole made their way over the mountain road to the village where they had left their coach. During their absence Wogan busied himself with cutting wood for the purpose of starting a fire, and had collected

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a large quantity of boughs by the time his friends returned, bearers of good news and bad.

The good news was that they had succeeded in obtaining some few poor supplies, a meagre chicken, some eggs, a ham, some hard bread, some coarse cheese, and some sour country wine, as well as an old iron' cooking-kettle that Gaydon, who had a forager's instinct, had managed to command. The bad news was that the coach would take longer to repair than they had hoped; first, because it had received more damage than they knew on the previous evening, and, next, because the village blacksmith was a very leisurely, not to say lazy, individual, and could not be persuaded or bribed to briskness.

Wogan, governing his impatience as best he might, decided that an attempt must be made to find Winquitz and his men. He, therefore, bade his comrades return to the village as soon as they had broken their fast with some bread and ham. At the village Gaydon was to mount the freshest horse and ride with all speed along the highroad toward Peri, keeping a sharp lookout for any sight of an ostensible hunting-party. If he found the Baron and his men he was to bring them at full gallop to Castel-Falcone. With their aid any attempt at Austrian interference might confidently be defied. O'Toole and Misset were to remain in the village and do all in their power to accelerate the mending of the coach. Thus instructed, the three

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friends took their departure, and Wogan was left alone to guard the still sleeping women.

With a great deal of patience and dexterity Wogan proceeded to build a fire with the sticks he had collected. He was not inexperienced in such domestic enterprises. Ever since he had followed the wars he had learned to shift for himself, with the result that he was as skilful in such matters as any sutler among the camp followers. When he had set up the sticks to his liking he produced a tinder-box and, sheltering it with his hat from the winds that blew so freely over the ruins, he succeeded after a tedious while in striking a light.

A few seconds later a fire was briskly burning on the space he had cleared. Then he rigged up gypsy-wise three tall poles made from roughly trimmed saplings and suspended from them the kettle that Gaydon's ingenuity had discovered. He had filled the kettle from the mountain stream, and now he waited for the water to boil before proceeding further with his cookery. He did not allow himself to reflect upon the evils of the situation in which he found himself. To reflect upon evils that you cannot avoid or prevent seemed ever to him a waste of time. If Gaydon should find the expected men all would be well, but till he knew the result of Gaydon's mission it was useless to dwell on what might happen if Gaydon's mission failed. In the mean time the best thing he could do was to devote himself heart and soul to the task of preparing a

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meal which might be sufficiently appetizing to tempt Clementina to eat.

He started at the form his meditation had taken, at the way in which in his mind he spoke of his charge. He realized, with tremors of heat and cold at the realization, that he thought of her not as "her Highness the Princess," but as Clementina, the fair, brave girl, the gay, delightful companion who had made their amazing escapade more enchanting than any tale he had ever heard told. Into these few, these intimate hours that had faded from the dial since Innsbruck town clock had chimed midnight for the flight he seemed now to have crowded a lifetime of divine friendship. The stars of those flying nights, the sunbeams of those flying days had caught up and carried on the fire-points of the flambeaux of Ohlau, and like them illuminated the loveliest face in the world.

"Clementina!" He murmured the name to himself again in a rapture, dwelling tenderly on its lingering syllables. To speak it so even in thought was to taste the sweetness of the savor of Eden's apple, to smell the fragrance of the eternal rose. If only she were free and his equal, one to whom he might hold out his hand with his heart in the palm of it. If only she were free. The thought haunted him insistently to the forgetfulness of the other barrier of her birth. He caught himself imagining what might happen if King James were suddenly to die. Kings might do so; kings were mortal.

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He found himself recalling some old lines in a roaring tragedy:

"Great kings have died
A day before the red assassin's blade
Was edged to slay them."

Suddenly he raged at the way his sick thoughts had led him. He frowned and whistled the burden of a soldier's song, and mentally reproved himself for his audacity. His reproof was interrupted by the sound of bubbling water, and he turned his attention again to Gaydon's kettle, and to the grizzly bird which awaited belated cooking. He was soon so busy with his preparations that he did not know he was not alone until the sound of a sweet voice giving him a cheerful good-morning made him glance up, and he saw the Princess standing on the threshold of the room wherein she had passed the night.

Clementina looked as fresh and fair and unjaded in the morning light as if she had passed the recent days in ease and leisure, instead of driving desperately across country, hunted by terrors. She now advanced toward Wogan with a smile. "Let me help you," she said, and made to steal his occupation from him.

Wogan stared at her in a rapture that he strove to temper with regret. "Your Highness awake and astir!" he said, reproachfully. "I hoped your Highness was resting."

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Clementina stretched her arms and drew in a deep breath of the soft mountain air. "My Highness is tired of resting," she protested. "My Highness wants to taste the clean air." There was a look of pleasure in her eyes as she glanced about her, enjoying the freshness of the morning and the beauty of the prospect visible through the ruined walls. It was with no show of eagerness that she asked, "Must we start soon?"

Wogan shook his head. "Impossible for the present, your Highness," he declared, resolutely. "The coach is still a-mending."

It was one of Clementina's chief charms in Wogan's eyes throughout that eventful journey that she never showed impatience when there was nothing to be done. She seated herself now on a rough seat that Wogan had constructed from the cushions of the carriage, and leaned forward, looking steadily at her companion. "Then my Highness wants to be amused," she said. She was silent and thoughtful for a few seconds, then commanded peremptorily, "Amuse me!"

Wogan entered into the spirit of the jest. "In what manner, your Highness?" he asked, with an air of portentous deference.

Clementina pretended to be annoyed. "That should be for you to discover," she answered, "but if you be slow-witted I will find the answer myself. I will help you to cook the meal."

She said this with an air of great decision, and

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reached out her hand to take from Wogan the somewhat withered bird he was about to deprive of its feathers, but Wogan clung to his prey. "I would not dream of troubling your Highness so far," he protested.

Clementina laughed blithely. "You think you can do better unaided," she said. "Vanity of men! Whatever made you a master-cook?"

Wogan was making good play now with his bird and wishing that the body he was rapidly denuding were a trifle less skinny. While he worked he explained: "The fortune of war, your Highness. When I was out in the Fifteen with his Majesty, your royal consort, I learned to better bad victuals with a little skill in dressing that I had picked up when I was a boy in County Kildare. While I was in Newgate, waiting to be hanged, I won some favor with my fellow-prisoners for my skill with pots and pans."

Clementina looked at him with eyes of cordial approval. "I did not dream a man of war could be so practical," she confessed.

Wogan was pleased at her earnestness. "I can assure your Highness," he said, "that the thing is fashionable. The Marshal de Mirepoix has given his name to a way of treating quails. The Duc de Montmerency was the first to cook chickens after the fashion that carries his name, and has not his royal Highness the Duc d'Orléans, Regent of France, invented a special and excellent way of

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baking bread? I assure your Highness Charles Wogan is in the mode."

Instantly Clementina rose to her feet, and, advancing to Wogan, laid an imperative hand upon the half-plucked bird. "If a duke may stew chickens," she said, "and a prince of the blood may bake bread, a princess may very well try her hand at a dish."

Wogan did not surrender his withered chicken. "It is true, your Highness," he admitted, "that Madame de Maintenon, who, although not of kingly blood, was the wife of a king, is likely to gain immortality by her way of cooking mutton cutlets."

"Yet you would deny me my chance of endless fame?" Clementina said, with a frown. "Shame on you! Come, what are you going to cook?"

"A chicken stew, your Highness," Wogan answered, with an air of pride. "I learned the trick of it from a gypsy in Transylvania many a good year gone."

By this time Clementina had spied the eggs that Misset had provided lying on the ground by Wogan's side. In a moment she had pounced upon them and held them up in triumph, two in each hand. "While you are plucking your bird," she said, "I will be boiling the eggs."

As she spoke she popped the eggs into the kettle, where the water had by this time been long spluttering furiously. As the eggs splashed their way into the petulant liquid some drops displaced sprang

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forward and caught Clementina on the wrist. Clementina gave a little shriek.

Wogan sprang to her side with instant sympathy. "What is it, madam?" he asked, and his face could not have carried more concern if the fate of empires had been involved in the answer.

Clementina showed him her hand, on which a small spot of angry red asserted itself. "I have burnt my hand," she cried, fretfully. As she spoke she pointed with her uninjured hand to the blemish that had been caused by the boiling water. "See there," she said, "already the blister rises."

Wogan took Clementina's hand very tenderly between both his own and looked at the little fierce splash with commiseration. "Your Highness," he cried, "does it pain you?"

As he asked the question he bent so low over the little hand which the boiling water had offended that his lips almost touched the sharply scarlet spot, which was the only indication of the ravage that the accident had effected. Suddenly he remembered himself and checked his folly. As he drew back from the white hand which he held prisoner he lifted his head and his eyes met the eyes of Clementina.

For an instant that seemed an eternity, and that yet, when all was said and done, was only an instant, the two seemed to regard each other steadfastly, dimly guessing at all that there was to know. There was a moment of tense humanity. Then the Great

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God of Custom triumphed. Wogan spoke with a voice which he endeavored to make at once careless and at ease.

"Oh, madam, madam," he said, laughing foolishly enough, "how the gossips of London would gape and stare and marvel if they could but know that the affianced bride of their rightful King was boiling eggs on a mountain-side in Italy with a poor Irish gentleman for her scullion?"

The gayety faded a little from Clementina's face. "Do you think I shall ever be Queen of England?" she asked, and there was a gravity that was almost sadness in her voice as she spoke.

"Never doubt it, lady," Wogan said, roundly, at once gladdened and saddened by the change in the talk. "I have no fine liking for the English, but I cannot think that they could long endure to be ruled by a High-Dutch Elector from Hanover while James Stuart was waiting to enjoy his own again."

Clementina sighed. "Is it so much sport, after all," she asked, "for us folk that are ordained by God to be kings and queens and princes and princesses? We have our rubs and troubles like the humblest. Did not the English cruelly kill my dear lord's grandfather in front of his own Palace of Whitehall? Is not my dear lord an exile from his dominion Heaven knows for how long? And here be I that am James Sobieski's daughter, and may be Queen of England. Have I not been a

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prisoner an age-long time in an Austrian town, and am I not now flying for dear life, and at this present cooking eggs on a hill while my coach is a-mending?"

It seemed to Wogan that it was very delightful to be on that hillside listening to James Sobieski's daughter enumerating her catalogue of woes; but the sweetest voice in the world ceased to sound, and it was clear that the owner of the sweetest voice in the world expected Wogan to say something.

"What your Highness says is as true as true," Wogan hastened to affirm. "It is Heaven's pleasure to remind the greatest, time and again, that they are mortal and vulnerable, like any peasant in his field, or sentinel on his beat. But a king is a king and God's lieutenant, though he feels aches and pains like the meanest."

Clementina nodded her head thoughtfully as she listened to Wogan's obvious wisdom. "There be times," she confessed, "when I wish I were neither a prince's daughter nor a prince's bride, but just a free, obscure maid."

Wogan knew in his heart that he wished the same thing, but he made a valiant effort and kept the knowledge tight shut. "Why does your Highness wish so whimsically?" he asked.

Clementina gave a little sigh. "Oh, I do not know," she said, wistfully. "Because I am tired of this long journey, I suppose—no, not really tired in body, never think that, only tired as to my mind.

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But as we drive and drive, day and night, with fear always flogging our poor cattle, why I have little to do but to think thoughts."

Wogan, his heart aching with a sympathy he dared not show, did his best to dissipate the clouds. "They should be blithe thoughts, bright thoughts, Highness," he insisted. "Thoughts of our goal creeping nearer and his Majesty waiting with such a smile on his face as should be more often seen there."

The pair were silent for a few age-long seconds. Then Clementina looked very steadily at her companion. "You are deeply devoted to his Majesty, Chevalier?" she asked.

"Is it devoted?" Wogan answered. "What Irish gentleman has another thought in his heart than love and loyalty to King James the Third, God bless him!"

Clementina pondered this problem for a moment, with her chin propped upon her hand. Then she spoke slowly. "He is a very handsome man, they tell me," she said.

Wogan agreed enthusiastically. "There never was a properer king of his inches in Christendom," he declared.

Clementina went on speaking, still with the same thoughtful look on her face. "Of course, I only know him," she said, "visage and carriage, by hearsay, and by such poor witness as a portrait may give." She lifted her chin from her hand and faced

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Wogan again. "Tell me, Chevalier, is King James at all a man of your seeming?"

As the girl looked at him Wogan felt as if his heart that was in his body was suddenly racked with intolerable pains. Why had not High Heaven been pleased to leave him free to woo her for himself instead of making him play the wooer for another, even if that other were Ireland's and England's King? Why might he not even now forget his allegiance, his duty, his honor, and tell the child that was seated in front of him, and that was speaking with so airy a grace, that when she thus whimsically linked his name with the name of King James she joined the name of the man that must be forever her lover with the name of the man that was fated to be her husband, the man she had never seen. But these were thoughts that Wogan should not admit even to himself that he was capable of thinking, thoughts that must be eternally shut away from the knowledge of the little Princess, his little Princess that could never be his. It was, therefore, with a countenance as clear as he could command that Wogan began to laugh.

"Good Lord! no, your Highness," he declared. "How should such a rough old soldier as myself be compared to his gracious Majesty?"

Clementina looked at him curiously. "Why do you call yourself a rough old soldier?" she asked. "Your manners are very gentle, and I do not think you are very old."

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Wogan still smiled. "For the matter of that I am not so very old either," he admitted. "But following the wars takes the smooth off the cheeks betimes, and I feel as if I had served for a thousand years."

Clementina mocked him a little. "That proves you to be very young, Charles Wogan," she asserted.

Wogan made her a smiling bow. "I will admit to any age your Highness may please to command, from nine to ninety."

Clementina seemed to be a little surprised at his hilarity. "Do you always keep such high spirits?" she asked.

"It is my wont, your Highness," Wogan assured her.

The frequent repetition of her title made Clementina frown. "Do not call me Highness so often, Chevalier," she said.

Wogan felt bound to protest, though he trembled as he protested. "It is my duty, my respectful duty," he declared.

Clementina denied him with a pretty decision of denial. "It is your duty to pleasure me," she said. "It is your duty to obey me if I wish you to be less formal, less ceremonious with me. Here in these mountains, in the midst of all these perils, in the length of this long journey, it seems trivial to maintain the princely state."

Wogan felt as if he stood on sliding sand that

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swiftly slipped away from him, hurrying him to destruction. He tried to still his throbbing heart; he tried to speak with the cold calmness that was due. "If you are now a fugitive princess," he explained, "you will soon be a fortunate queen."

Clementina did not appear to be at all convinced. "But in the mean time," she said, authoritatively, "let us carry ourselves more equally. We are two comrades, you and I, sharing dangers and hardships together, and for a future queen I have mighty little dignity to brag of. I wish you would call me by my name."

Wogan protested again, as a drowning man might protest against destruction. "Your Highness, I would not so far presume—" he stammered, and was dumb.

"At least," Clementina pleaded, winningly, almost wooingly, "while we are in the thick of these adventures. They have made me so cruelly aware of my mortality that I wish to be no more than a simple mortal for the nonce."

"Your Highness," Wogan repeated, weakly, "I could not so far presume—" He said no more, for Clementina instantly interrupted him.

"There," she cried, "you offend again, and wantonly, after due warning." She was silent for a breathing time, then she asked, wistfully, "Do you not like my name?"

Wogan made a great gesture of protest. "It is the most beautiful name in the world," he declared, and spoke the truth of his heart.

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"Very well, then," Clementina said, pouting like a provoking school-girl, and looking deliciously mischievous. "Go on then."

Wogan's hand and heart were on fire; he could scarcely speak. The golden air of the spring morning seemed to sway around him, to be full of noises, odors, colors, wonders. "What am I to say?" he gasped, unconscious of the foolishness of his question.

"You are to call me by my name," the girl said, with an assumption of gravity that was almost terrible because of the greater gravity that it masked.

Wogan looked at her steadily. "Clementina," he said.

The girl's assumed gravity shifted into a smile. "Charles!" she cried, gayly. Then quite quickly she seemed to realize, perhaps from what she saw in his eyes, the worth of the one word so spoken, and the gayety faded from her face.

XXII

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR

WHAT Wogan might have said next, or Clementina said again in her turn, lies in the limbo of lost things, for at that moment their conversation was interrupted. Mistress Misset appeared in the doorway of the room where the two women had slept. Mistress Misset was looking refreshed by her night's rest, but there was an expression of agitation on her face which Wogan in his own confusion at first failed to notice. He found himself, for once in his life, ill at ease, and he spoke and carried himself with an awkwardness that would have been obvious to Mistress Misset if her mind had not been preoccupied.

"Her Highness and I," Wogan explained, hurriedly, "have been cooking the eggs for breakfast."

Clementina, who was perfectly composed, turned to the kettle and peeped over the edge at the dancing water that had been boiling unheeded for long enough. "They must be rather hard," she said, calmly.

Mistress Misset seemed pleased at the prospect of food. "I must admit," she said, "that I am

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dreadfully hungry." She paused for a moment, and Wogan was now sufficiently collected to notice that something was troubling her. She hesitated, and then went on. "By-the-way, Chevalier, there are two men coming up the road leading to here. I thought I ought to tell you."

Wogan nodded. "Oh yes," he answered. "It will be O'Toole and Misset returning from the village."

Mistress Misset shook her head vigorously. "It is certainly neither O'Toole nor my husband," she insisted. "I saw the men well, and they were both strangers to me."

The word "strangers" stirred Wogan with a sense of alarm which he was careful not to betray. Following the guidance of Mistress Misset's hand he went to a gap in the ruins and looked in the direction she indicated. On the smooth, green slope of the hill he could see no one approaching.

"They are hidden behind the wood," Mistress Misset explained. "Two men; I saw them distinctly. They were coming toward us."

"Some peasants, probably," Wogan suggested, but Mistress Misset would not hear of this.

"They were dressed like gentlefolk," she insisted, and even as she spoke two figures came out of the wood about half-way up the hill and began to climb slowly through the thinner brushwood. They were a considerable distance off, but Wogan knew them at once. The shorter of the two, the

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one that led the way and seemed to move more briskly than his companion, was his Serene Highness the Prince of Niemen, and the companion was the solemn and pompous British envoy, Sir Timothy Wynstock.

Wogan was not easily taken by surprise, but the appearance in that place of those two men did surprise him very much indeed, even to the extent of allowing that surprise for the first few seconds to overshadow and even to eclipse the imminent danger which those two presences portended. He stared in amazement and rage at the two figures slowly ascending the slope. Serious pursuit he had feared in the first stages of the flight; later his apprehensions had been for some courier rousing authority against them. But he had not dreamed that the Prince of Niemen himself would track them down, and now he paid him the compliment of recognizing in him a more determined and dangerous enemy than he had expected.

Swiftly Wogan drew Mistress Misset away from the open space where she might be visible to those below, and led her back into the middle of the hall. He turned to Clementina, who stood composedly waiting with well-bridled curiosity.

"We are pursued," he said, quietly. "Our enemies are upon us, but there are only two of them, the Prince of Niemen and the Englishman."

"What shall we do?" Clementina asked as quietly, with no show of alarm in her tranquil voice.

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She seemed to have sufficient confidence in Wogan's power of meeting every emergency and overcoming every difficulty.

"You and Mistress Misset," Wogan answered, "had better retire to your room. It is possible that these gentlemen may not know we are here; at least it is better that we should defer their knowledge as long as possible. I will wait here concealed and see what they want."

The Princess and Mistress Misset obeyed his instructions, Clementina with perfect composure, and Mistress Misset trembling and with difficulty restraining tears.

Wogan instantly busied himself with looking to the priming of his pistols, and as he was so engaged he was joined by O'Toole and Misset, that came scrambling to him from the back of the ruins.

A glance at Wogan's face told Misset that he had no news to deliver. "You know," he affirmed, and Wogan nodded. Misset hastily explained that while he and O'Toole had been idling in the village endeavoring to animate the local blacksmith to unwilling exertions they were perturbed by the apparition on the highway of two horsemen riding furiously. After a little while O'Toole's naturally long sight, preternaturally sharpened by the recollection of his humiliation at Strasbourgh, believed that it recognized the Prince of Niemen. Instantly he and Misset quitted the village, and, fearing to be overtaken if they followed the direct road to the

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ruins of Castel-Falcone, they made their roundabout way through the trees at the rear of the castle, meaning to arrive in time to warn Wogan, but arriving to find Wogan already warned.

With the aid of his friends Wogan hastily unrigged his cooking tackle and had it conveyed outside. He spread earth and leaves over the blackened space on the ground which denoted the recent presence of a fire. Next he removed the coats that had served to curtain the Princess's room and gave them to his friends, whom he instructed to wait out of sight until such time as he should call upon them for aid by whistling the signal of a Jacobite tune. Then he concealed himself in a part of the banquet hall and waited upon the event.

A little later the Prince of Niemen and Sir Timothy Wynstock came into the deserted hall. Sir Timothy, who was a heavy man and unused to climbing, was panting and gasping for breath. His ruddy face glowed a noble crimson, and streams of sweat ran down from his forehead. His companion, that was of a nimbler carriage, had suffered less from the steep ascent, but even he seemed well content to pause and take breath. The two men looked suspiciously about them.

"They must be here," the Prince said, "if the tale that fellow told us be true."

"I see no signs of them," Wynstock said, sourly. He was irritated out of his usual solemn composure by recent events. A good rider across country at

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home, he did not necessarily relish the persistent pursuit of the Princess that Niemen had kept up ever since her flight had been discovered. The whole thing seemed to him undignified and un-English, and unlikely to be successful. He did not share the Prince's confidence in the result of the pursuit. It was scarcely likely that the fugitives, even if they were come up with, would surrender themselves at the mere summons of a German prince and an English diplomatist.

The means to enforce submission were, indeed, for the moment wanting. The force with which they had originally sallied from Innsbruck had long been left behind for lack of the possibility of remounting. Niemen and Wynstock had pushed on alone, furiously using such horses as they could obtain, but lacking all news of those they pursued until they arrived at Trent. There they found an indignant Governor disturbed from the seclusion enforced by a slight attack of gout, in order to listen to the bewildering narrative of a staggering, bemused courier that told a wild tale of flight from Innsbruck and stolen papers.

The Prince of Niemen came like a deity out of a machine to confirm the fellow's tale. His name and rank commanded the respect of the Governor of Trent, who was still further impressed by the solemnity of the representative of Great Britain. He instantly and willingly provided Niemen and Wynstock with two of the best horses in his well-

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furnished stables, and he further consented, though less readily, to afford Niemen an escort of twenty horse-soldiers to enable him to overpower the refugees if he should come up with them.

The Governor's unwillingness arose from the fear he had that the fugitives must by this time be well within Venetian territory and, in his invalided condition, he was something timorous of provoking anything approaching to an international complication. But Niemen overcame his scruples, and very soon he and his Englishman were again in the saddle and upon the road. As before, the superiority of their mounts enabled the two leaders easily to outstrip their more heavily mounted followers, who were well out of sight when Niemen and Wynstock clattered into the village, unaware that they had been observed by some of those that they followed so hotly, and made the inquiries which led them to attempt the fairly toilsome ascent to the ruins of Castel-Falcone.

"They must be here," the Prince reasserted, glancing narrowly all about him as he spoke and noting signs that told him much. The man's words were convincing. "What other party of men and women would be travelling this way in such haste?"

Wynstock admitted the likelihood of his companion's suggestion with a grunt. "I see no signs of them," he said.

"I do," the Prince answered. "There has been a fire burning here very recently." And as he

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spoke he stirred with his boot among the leaves that Wogan had cast over his improvised hearth, and showed his companion the blackened earth.

"Perhaps they have gone?" Wynstock suggested, but the Prince would not accept the suggestion.

"That is not likely," he said; "in any case, let us search the ruins thoroughly and make sure." He turned to his companion and spoke in a lower voice. "If they should be here," he said, "I will tell them that our soldiers are below in the woods. You must confirm this statement, and it may persuade them that resistance is useless. In any case, the arrival of our men can only be a matter of time."

He left his companion and was going toward the door of the room that sheltered Clementina, when Wogan emerged from his hiding-place and walked calmly to greet him.

Wogan greeted the two gentlemen as cheerfully as if he were meeting them in a gallery at Versailles. "I take it as a compliment," he said, "that you have been at such pains to seek our company."

The Prince of Niemen was the first to recover from the surprise which the unexpected apparition of the Chevalier had caused him and his companion.

"Truly," he said, with a malign smile, "I value your company very highly, for I think I have found you to be a man of many parts, and you should make a diverting companion. Yet, without offence

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to your vanity, I must needs say that it is less your society I seek than the society of a certain lady whom you have very unwisely prevailed upon to break prison and who should, I am thinking, now be very glad to return to her rightful custodians."

Wogan laughed pleasantly. "You form false ideas of life, my dear Prince," he said, "and I am afraid you will be sometimes disappointed in the hopes you build upon." He turned to Wynstock and addressed him affably, "Do you not agree with me, my dear sir?" he asked.

Wynstock's face was very red with anger. "You are an amazing rascal, sir," he said, shaking his fist at the Chevalier. "Were you in England you should be set in the stocks or put in the pillory for your conduct."

"Come, come, Sir Timothy," Wogan answered, urbanely, "you are unreasonable to be so wroth at my little innocent trick. But, indeed, if I were in England I should be in worse case than you suggest, for I would have you know that I was out in the Fifteen, and taken at Preston fight, and that I broke prison from Newgate. So I think that if I were in England now it is the gallows I should be most fearing."

"You deserve to be hanged, sure enough," Wynstock growled. "Who the devil are you?"

Wogan laughed more merrily than before. "His Highness," he said, "would tell you that I am Sir Timothy Wynstock, British emissary to his Majesty

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the Emperor, and if his Highness questioned you, you would at the first blush be prepared to say that I was the hereditary Prince of Niemen. I thank God that neither name fits me. Let me present myself. I am the Chevalier Charles Wogan, of Rathcoffy, in Kildare in Ireland, at present employed upon a special mission by his Majesty King James the Third of England, Scotland, Ireland, and France, whom God defend."

He took off his hat with a flourish as he spoke the last words, and then replaced it at a defiant angle and gave his enemies a chance to speak.

"The mission is at an end," the Prince of Niemen observed, dryly. "Your game is up, young gentleman-adventurer."

"I think not so," Wogan answered, contemptuously.

"You are at my mercy," the Prince said. "I have followed you from Innsbruck. I carry an order for your arrest and the arrest of your companions."

"And how," asked Wogan, "do you propose to enforce your order?"

"I ride," the Prince explained, "with an escort of twenty men, well armed and absolutely at my command. If you are foolish enough to attempt resistance, I warn you that the consequences are likely to be serious to you and your accomplices."

"I do not see your twenty men," Wogan answered, with a fine air of indifference. The news

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was exceedingly disagreeable to him, but he was careful to show no sign of concern.

"They wait at the foot of the hill," the Prince replied, lying cheerfully. "They await my command to ascend. Come, sir, your game is played. You will do well to surrender."

Wogan shook his head. "My game is not played to the end yet," he said, "and your twenty men shall be of no avail to you. Any order you carry is valueless, for you are no longer in the dominion of the Emperor, but in the territories of the States of Venice."

The Prince frowned slightly at Wogan's words, for he had hoped maybe that Wogan was not so nicely aware of his geographical position. The words had a greater effect upon Sir Timothy. He had all the insular politician's respect for established boundaries and regard for the inviolability of frontier lines. He caught the Prince by the arm. "If what he says be true," he whispered, "we will do well to proceed warily. It would not become a representative of his Britannic Majesty to be involved in any question of irregular action as regards a country with whom we are at peace."

The Prince shook off the restraining arm impatiently. "Leave it to me, my good sir," he answered. "The point is one of little moment and shall not save this fellow." Again addressing Wogan, he said: "Sir, for the last time I command you to give up the lady whom you have inveigled

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into this act of folly, and to surrender yourself and your companions to the justice of my master the Emperor!"

"Sir," Wogan answered, mimicking his manner of command, "for the last time and for the first time and for any time at all, I shall do nothing of the kind."

The Prince scowled at him, and then glancing around and raising his voice, he said: "If the Princess Clementina be anywhere within hearing I advise for her own welfare and for the sake of her companions to take my advice and give herself up."

He had scarcely spoken the words when the Princess came out of the room in which she was concealed, and from which she had overheard all that had passed. "I am the Princess Clementina Sobieski," she said.

XXIII

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WOGAN thought that never had Clementina seemed more beautiful than she showed at that moment, as she stood before them, her delicate loveliness framed in the rugged stonework of the doorway. Niemen and the Englishman saluted her profoundly, and Wogan watched with a flush of anger the obvious admiration on Niemen's evil face.

"Madam," the Prince said, "I rejoice to see you. Would that I had had the honor earlier."

He was evidently prepared to continue in this strain, but Wynstock interrupted him, plucking him impatiently at his sleeve, and whispering to him to make proper presentation. Thus urged, Niemen obeyed.

"Madam," he said, "let me, in the first place, present to you Sir Timothy Wynstock, the envoy from Great Britain. In the second place, let me present myself. I am the Prince of Niemen, very devotedly at your service." Again he saluted deeply, and again he eyed the Princess with the leering admiration that made Wogan furious.

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The Princess in answer addressed him very quietly. "I have been restrained," she said, "in gross violation of the laws of nations and of the courtesy due to illustrious houses, a prisoner against my will at Innspruck in the dominion of the Emperor of Austria. I have been freed from that imprisonment by the courage and daring of this gentleman and his friends, and I am now journeying to Italy to meet my affianced husband, his Majesty King James the Third."

Sir Timothy frowned at the sound of this title, but he said nothing, and the Prince answered Clementina in a cajoling voice.

"Your Highness," he said, "his Majesty the Emperor of Austria, acting in accordance with the King of England—"

Clementina interrupted him. "You mean the Elector of Hanover," she said. "The King of England is now in Rome."

The Prince shrugged his shoulders. "It is not worth while to argue that point," he said. "The Elector of Hanover is certainly *de facto* King of England, even if the Chevalier de St. George be King *de jure*. The ruler of England and the ruler of Austria were unwilling to see so fair and amiable a princess unite her destiny with that of an exiled prince who is a dependent upon foreign bounty for his existence. In restraining you from an act of rashness which you would certainly regret they acted with a kindness and thoughtful concern for

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your interests which you will hereafter recognize. Let me therefore conjure you to quit this place and return with me to Innsbruck."

"I am going to Rome," Clementina answered, quietly.

Niemen still smiled, but there was a hint of menace in his voice as he continued: "I hope your Highness will not be obdurate enough to compel me to employ other methods than those of peaceful entreaty."

Clementina looked at him disdainfully. "Sir," she said, "I will detain you no longer. I warn you that if you attempt to take me by force from this place you are committing an offence against the laws of nations, and this you, sir," she continued, turning to Wynstock, "will be able to assure him even better than I."

The Prince bowed and answered with studied politeness. "I think," he said, "your Highness may be mistaken as to the exact position of this hill upon the map of Europe. At least, I cannot now afford the time to verify the statement. My zeal for your safety and my duty to the Emperor compel me to do my utmost to deliver you from the hands of these adventurers."

"I have nothing more to say," Clementina replied, quietly. "You may retire, sir."

Wogan moved a little nearer to the Princess. "You hear her Highness," he said. "You are dismissed; the audience is at an end. Good-day to you."

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Niemen took no further notice of Wogan than to wave him aside with a contemptuously imperative, "Pray be silent, sir, while your betters are conversing." Then he addressed himself to Clementina again. "Madam," he entreated, "I must very humbly and earnestly beg of you not to yield to any feelings of rashly formed dislike, but to give your most serious and careful attention to what I feel still called upon to say."

Clementina looked steadily at the Prince, and there was neither like nor dislike in her glance, but only a certain disdainful curiosity. "What," she asked, "do you still wish to say to me?"

The insolence of Niemen's manner when he was dealing with Wogan now vanished and gave place to a florid display of politeness. "Madam," he said, with a sweeping flourish of his hat, "I am here to make an appeal to you." As he spoke he endeavored to soften his countenance into an aspect of tenderness and entreaty. "My position," he continued "is an unfortunate one, for I seem to be forcing my attentions upon a lady who is apparently reluctant to receive them." Here he gave a little sigh which he intended to be pathetic, and resumed. "But I have comforted myself, your Highness, with the thought that as we have never met until this moment the reluctance of the lady need not be interpreted as a personal matter." He paused for a moment, as if he expected the Princess to confirm his words, but she kept silent, and the

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Prince went on. "Now that we have met," he said, earnestly, "I wish with my whole heart to persuade your Highness to abandon this unhappy escapade, to return with your natural guardians, this gentleman and myself, to Innsbruck, and then, above all, to make your humble servant the happiest of mortals by honoring him with your hand."

Clementina answered him very quietly. "Prince," she said, "it is my way to deal frankly with all persons, and I will deal frankly with you. I trust that you are too gallant a man to proceed any further in this matter after what I am about to say. I do not wish to return with you to Innsbruck, and, in a word, I do not mean to do so. Let us go on our way in peace. My heart is given, and I cannot recall it."

She ceased speaking, but Niemen, who was looking fixedly at her, did not answer; so Clementina challenged him. "Come, Prince, what do you say?"

Niemen, with his gaze still fixed upon her face, answered her composedly: "Princess, you are very beautiful."

Clementina flushed a little and looked at him haughtily. "That," she said, "is no answer."

Niemen shook his head. "Indeed, madam," he protested, "but it is, and the best answer in the world. If from the first I was more than willing to accept the union which it pleased two sovereigns to suggest, your flight from me made you seem in

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my eyes the most desirable wife in the world. Such is my peculiar humor. Judge, therefore, what I feel now after having seen you. Before, I loved a shadow like Ixion in the tale; to-day I can assert proudly that I love the most beautiful reality in the world."

Wogan looked and felt as if he would like to run a sword through the speaker. The Englishman frowned disapproval of a way of conducting a difficult situation that did not appear to him at all in accordance with the best traditions of diplomacy. The Princess only showed some slight annoyance.

"Your protestations offend me," she said, coldly. "I have appealed to you as a woman, I now command you as a princess, to leave me alone."

The Prince shook his head, and there was a mocking smile on his lips as he answered her. "Your Highness wrongs me," he said, "and yourself, in thinking that I could obey such a command."

"Then," said Clementina, calmly, "there is no use my remaining here any longer." She turned to retire, when Wynstock, advancing, checked her. He hoped that the dignified eloquence of a British statesman might have greater weight than the ill-timed wooings of the Prince.

"Madam," he said, "speaking as I do in the name of my illustrious sovereign, let me persuade you to change your mind." Wynstock's entreaty was no more successful than the pleadings of the Prince.

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"I have said my say," Clementina answered, and quietly passed out of the room.

Wynstock was distinctly ruffled by his failure. "Very abrupt," he muttered to himself, in a tone of strong condemnation. The Prince looked at him and laughed.

He repeated aloud in a sneering voice the words that Clementina had used. "She has given her heart and cannot recall it." He eyed Wogan derisively. "Strange words," he commented, "about a man she has never seen. Can you throw any light on this speech, Chevalier?"

Wogan looked the dislike he felt. "I will not discuss her Highness with you," he said. "You have had your answer, and if I may suggest it without seeming inhospitable, it is time for you to go."

Without taking any notice of Wogan's suggestion, the Prince turned to Wynstock and spoke swiftly in a low voice. "We are two men," he said, "to a woman and a man. I will engage this fellow, and you can secure the woman."

Sir Timothy did not at all relish his companion's proposal, and was about to urge him to wait for the arrival of the soldiers, who must surely be soon at hand, when Wogan, as if divining the meaning of the colloquy, whistled a few bars of a Jacobite air, and in answer to that summons O'Toole and Misset made their appearance, each armed with sword and pistols.

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The sight of these unexpected allies somewhat dashed the ardor of the Prince of Niemen. "You see, sir," said Wogan, "that we are not altogether unprepared for pleasant visits like yours, and that you may as well now draw that visit to a close."

The Prince frowned, but almost immediately his frown changed to a smile, for as he glanced round he caught sight on the distant road of a cloud of dust through which he could discern the gleam of steel. "I will leave you for the present," he said, "but I will return again very soon and this time with a larger company. I see my men approaching, and your resistance will be useless. I shall be here again very shortly to take charge of the Princess."

Then, taking Wynstock by the arm, he quitted the ruins with his companion, and the pair went slowly down the steep hill together. Below on the road the cloud of dust was drawing nearer. The Prince began to run down the hill with considerable alacrity for a man of his build, waving his arms wildly as a signal to the approaching troop. The cloud of dust came to a halt, dissipated, and revealed a body of horsemen. Wogan could see them dismount and tether their horses in obedience to the commands of the Prince.

XXIV

THE BATTLE OF CASTEL-FALCONE

WOGAN looked thoughtfully at Misset and O'Toole, who, for their part, returned his glance with the air of easy unconcern which it behooved all Irish gentlemen in the regiment of Dillon to wear on occasions of danger. Wogan addressed his companions with something of the proud confidence with which Cæsar might have addressed the Tenth Legion on the eve of going into action.

"My boys," he said, cheerfully, "our little campaign is keeping up its character for liveliness and human interest. Our excellent friend the Prince of Niemen is paying us the compliment of showing us what he expects from three Irish gentlemen that have the honor to serve King James. We must show him that we are worthy of his courtesy."

O'Toole and Misset nodded approval of their leader's words. Wogan continued with a briskness that was almost hilarity.

"The Prince of Niemen," he went on, "informs us that he has twenty men at his back. That brings the number of our enemies up to twenty-two, but I think we may exclude the Englishman from our

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estimate. I will do him the justice to say that I am sure he would like the fighting well enough, but I think that his formal mind will be much too offended at the thought of infringing the rights of the Venetian Republic to allow him conscientiously to take an active share in the engagement. That reduces the number of our foemen to twenty-one, which, according to a very simple process of division, allots seven of them to each one of us, no great odds as I take it for gentlemen that have the honor to serve King James. Here we be, the three of us, with a pair of pistols apiece, and our good swords, to say nothing of a very fair reserve of ammunition. We ought to be able to hold this place for a long time against the Prince and his followers. The ascent is steep; there is little or no cover for the last half of it; we are all, I am glad to think, good shots. The odds will be marvellously reduced, I am thinking, before we get to hand-to-hand business."

He paused at this point to await the enthusiastic agreement that he expected from his friends; but, not a little to his surprise, they remained silent. In another instant, however, their silence was explained to him as the touch of a soft hand on his arm made him turn and face the Princess, who had quitted her refuge and come to join the council of her defenders. Mistress Misset, paler than ever, but with a look of courageous resolution on her face, stood in the door of the room and watched the scene.

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The Princess addressed the three men in a clear, firm voice. "Chevalier and friends," she said, "if I were to consult only my own wishes, I should resist to the death this attempt to capture me, for I would sooner perish here than return ignominiously to the prison I have left. But there is your life to consider; your life and those of your companions, and these I would not willingly endanger."

"Your Highness," Wogan said, simply, "shows now as always the greatness of her heart, but I and my comrades adventured on this expedition with the purpose of setting you free and bringing you in safety to my royal master, and as far as we are concerned we will carry out our purpose as long as we have breath in our bodies. I know that in saying this I speak their mind as well as my own." O'Toole and Misset cheered these words lustily. When they had made an end Wogan continued his speech. "The Prince has no right to attempt to detain us now that we are out of the Emperor's dominion, but he considers clearly that might makes right, and I have little doubt that he will attempt to take you by force of arms. However, though the odds are against us, they are none so great that they should prove disconcerting, and I make no doubt that we shall teach our assailants a lesson in international etiquette."

Wogan spoke with a greater confidence than he felt, and it may well be that Clementina knew this, but she smiled approval of his speech. "You are

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gallant gentlemen," she said, "and the King and Queen are indeed happy that they have such friends to help them in their need. All I now ask is that you let me stay here and help you to fight. I can reload the pistols."

Wogan was all for dissuading the Princess from this course, but she was too resolute in her insistence, finally converting her request with a pretty air of sternness into a command, that there was no help for it but to obey. The powder-horns, bullets, and the extra pistols which the party carried were laid upon the ground, and the Princess, aided by Mistress Misset, who, with astonishing determination, showed no sign of the terrors which she felt for her husband and herself, for her queen and her companions, proceeded with great skill and precision to load the weapons.

While the two women were thus employed, Wogan soon made his preparations for defence. The castle could practically only be attacked from three points. The first of these he took for himself, and he stationed one of his friends at each of the others with instructions to fire at any one attempting to scale the hill. "Gaydon may be here at any moment with aid," he thought, "and if we can keep these fellows off for half an hour all may yet be well."

For a while all was very quiet. The greenwood at the base of the hill had swallowed up the soldiers, and there was no visible sign of any enemy in the

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vicinity. Suddenly O'Toole called out that he perceived men creeping through the brushwood at his side of the hill. "Wait till they are within pistol-shot," Wogan commanded, "and then fire."

A second later O'Toole's pistols rang out. One of the invaders fell; the others took to their heels and disappeared again among the trees. For a few moments the attack was suspended. Then an attempt was made to rush the ascent from all three points, but the volley from the defenders again defeated the attack.

This manœuvre was repeated again and again, and each time, thanks to the steady aim of the Irishmen and the rapidity with which Clementina and Mistress Misset reloaded the discharged weapons, the attack was repulsed with loss to the attackers. The besiegers, indeed, fired wildly with the carbines they carried, but their shooting was hurried; they had nothing but the ruined walls to aim at, and the volleys did no harm. While this preliminary skirmish continued the Prince of Niemen, like a discreet general, did not expose his person, but issued his commands from the safe concealment of the wood. Not a few of the invaders lay on the hillside, and the rushes of those that remained grew less and less frequent and more easily scattered and forced back to cover by the fusillade of Wogan and his comrades.

All would have seemed well with the besieged but for one thing. By this time their ammunition was

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running short, and Wogan advised holding their remaining fire till the last moment. The flagging of the fugitives' fire told its tale to those below and encouraged them to a more determined method of attack. Already more than a dozen men were climbing as quickly as they could that part of the hill which it was least easy to defend by pistol fire. In a few minutes they would be at the top of the hill, and then a hand-to-hand conflict must follow, with the odds heavily against the defenders.

As the assailants came laboring up the hill Wogan and his friends fired again, bringing down a couple of the climbers and causing the others to come to a momentary halt. Mechanically Wogan reached out his hand to Clementina for another pistol; but this time the mute appeal was not met by the prompt presentment of a freshly loaded arm. Clementina had left her task and was standing by his side.

"The ammunition is all gone," she said, quietly. Her face was perfectly calm, and she rested her hand for a moment on Wogan's shoulder as if to assure him of her sympathy in this catastrophe.

Wogan said nothing. He would at that moment have cheerfully exchanged the leave of his life for a barrel of powder and a bucketful of bullets. In spite of his high talk he could not help dreading the result of the hand-to-hand encounter that must now arise. The enemy, indeed, that had not come out expecting such battle, had used much of their

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ammunition, but had not exhausted it, and they were more than three to one. As Wogan looked about him in desperation, his attention was arrested by the mass of half-destroyed window frame that stood poised on the wall of the ruins overlooking the slope which the enemy was scaling. Some of the iron bars that had once crossed its space still remained loosely in their sockets. Wogan found a sudden inspiration in the sight. The thing was clearly top-heavy; time and weather and creeping plants had loosened the stones. The whole structure seemed to hold together by mere chance. Wogan ran to the window, and with little difficulty dragged one of the iron bars from its place, and, using it as a kind of crowbar, forced one end of it between some of the stones of the pillar of the ruined arch. In an instant Misset and O'Toole, appreciating their leader's purpose, had followed his example, and the three men were busy prising with their improvised appliances at the stones of the tottering mass. It was no easy task to force an entrance between the stones that had been so well placed together by the builders of the castle, but the fierce energy of the three men succeeded in forcing the iron bars into crevices and in making the masonry above them oscillate with their efforts.

What they sought to do they accomplished only just in time. The attacking party were within a few feet of the castle, when the mass of masonry yielded to the efforts of Wogan and his friends,

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swayed ominously, reeled like a falling column, and then hurled itself forward, revolving itself as it fell into an avalanche of flying stones that swept the terrified invaders out of its path. The victory was for the moment with the besieged.

With shouts of triumph O'Toole and Misset leaped from their cover of the ruins for the purpose of securing the carbines and the ammunition of some of the fallen men. Mistress Misset, her fortitude failing at last, had slipped in a heap, and so lay, huddled and swooning. Wogan turned to Clementina with a wistful smile. He had done his best; he could do no more; all kinds of wild fancies were whirling in his mind. He seemed to be again in the dancing-room at Ohlau, to hear the fiddles scraping, to see the light shining on silks and uniforms, jewels and orders, and in the midst of it all to meet the marvel of a girl's face. The marvel was before him now, conquering the knowledge of imminent ruin.

Clementina came toward him, and she had a pistol in her hand. "It is loaded," she said. "I kept it to the last. Are we near the end?"

Wogan shook his head sadly. "I fear me we are," he answered. "That was our parting shot," and he pointed as he spoke to the spot where a few moments before the huge fragment of the ruined window had stood. "We have still our swords, but I think we must be outnumbered." He had no thought now of speaking other than the truth to

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the fair, pale girl who looked so grave and so brave.

Clementina held out her pistol for Wogan to take, and he did so, vaguely wondering, and thrust it into his coat-pocket. "When you think our last chance has gone," she said, quietly, "I want you to kill me."

Wogan began to gasp a horrified protest, but the girl stayed him with a gesture.

"I will not go back," she said. "If this is the end of our journey I will end with it, here and now. I will die with you." She paused for an instant looking steadily at him, then she continued. "I would rather die with you than live without you."

Wogan caught her in his arms, and she clung to him lovingly. It seemed to him that he and this woman, the dearly beloved, the distant, the divine, were standing on the threshold of eternity and must needs speak the truth, knowing the truth.

"Dearest," he cried, "I am mad to speak, but I must speak. On the edge of death I can tell you the truth. Clementina, I love you."

Her hold upon him tightened. "Dearest, I love you," she whispered.

Wogan could wish time to stand still and leave them so clasped, so confessed, through the ages. But time takes no heed of lovers, and in another moment they stood apart, for O'Toole and Misset were returning, and O'Toole and Misset must not find

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them in each other's arms. But each looked at the other longingly, adoringly.

O'Toole and Misset came in. They had picked up a couple of carbines apiece and some ammunition pouches.

"They have rallied again," Misset said, calmly. "I think there are still ten of them."

He tossed a carbine to Wogan and an ammunition pouch, and the three men loaded their new weapons in silence. Clementina came close to Wogan and whispered to him. "You will keep the last shot for me," she said; "promise, my lover." And Wogan, with an unconquerable madness in his blood, promised in a passionate glance.

Outside on the hill the rallied troopers were creeping steadily along. They were ten in number, and they still carried their carbines, which showed that they still had shots to fire. This time Niemen was with them, walking behind them and encouraging them to advance. Wogan watched with a strange exultation the slow approach of the enemy, waiting for the last moment, when he would again take Clementina in his arms.

Suddenly a great shouting filled all the adjacent wood with noise, and there was the sound also of the galloping of many horses, and then armed men, many armed men, came tumbling and stumbling out of the woods on to the hill, and Wogan saw first that Gaydon was with the new-comers and was leading them on, and then that Niemen and his men

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had turned and were running away at full speed. Gaydon had found Winquitz; Gaydon and Winquitz had come in time. Wogan turned toward Clementina and caught her in his arms as she fell fainting.

XXV

BLUE WATER

WOGAN pointed to where in the distance the town lay, the town with two strange towers that leaned from the perpendicular toward each other, their suspended inclination conspicuous against the yellow sky. "Yonder is Bologna, your Highness," he said, with an exultation in his voice that corresponded to no kindred exultation in his heart. The eyes of all the party were fixed upon the distant town that was to be the goal of their pilgrimage—the town that meant safety at last after so many perils endured and overpassed.

The little company was again as it had been at the beginning when it started from the doors of the "Black Eagle." Winquitz, jingling in his pockets the gold he had so loyally earned, had returned to his Prince. The hunting-party, its work done and well done, had broken up and scattered in all directions. Now Bologna, that had seemed so far, lay close at hand.

O'Toole, Gaydon, and Misset surveyed their haven with the satisfied composure of men who have done what they wished to do and meant to do.

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Mistress Misset's face was wreathed in such delightful smiles as she had not worn for many a long day. Only she to whom the sight of the ancient and famous city might well have been expected to afford the liveliest gratification showed neither in her bearing nor in her speech any sign of excessive joy. Clementina quitted the carriage and stood for a while silently on the highway, shading her eyes with her hands as she gazed in the direction of the distant city. What thoughts she thought her face did not betray, for it was fixed and settled like the face of one that sleeps.

After a little while she turned to Wogan and held out her hand, and he took it and kissed it. "I have to thank you," she said, "for having brought me so far." Then she turned and added, "You and your friends," and extended the same favor of her hand to each of Wogan's companions.

"There were times, your Highness," Gaydon said, "when I thought we should never have the pleasure of beholding yonder city."

O'Toole pulled him impatiently by the sleeve. "Be easy," he protested. "That is no kind of talk for an Irishman and a soldier."

Misset smiled and said nothing.

Clementina turned to Wogan. "Did you ever think so, Chevalier?" she asked.

Wogan shook his head. "Your Highness," he said, "it is ever my way when I undertake a piece of business to assume that I will bring it to a success-

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ful issue, and, having made that assumption, I go on with it and think no further as to what may befall."

The Princess applauded him. "It is a wise policy," she cried.

"It is a philosophical policy," Misset said, dryly, "if a man can but keep to it."

Wogan laughed gayly. "It gives a man," he said, "the advantage of self-confidence in any undertaking, and even if the undertaking come to naught your misluck does not increase during the course of it with doubts and fretting. To be confident of success is half-way to the laurels. But by confidence," he added, after a moment's pause, "I do not mean the vanity of the unwise and the unwary, but such reasonable reliance upon himself as a man may have that has seen something of the world and affairs and learned his lesson by them."

Having delivered himself of this much philosophy, Wogan now suggested that the party should resume their journey, but the Princess declined for the time being to enter the coach again. "Now that we are so near the end of our enterprise," she declared, "there is no such violent hurry for the last stage." And she announced her determination to walk a little ways along the road, which now was fairly even and easy travelling, and she signified her pleasure to Wogan that he should walk with her. Mistress Misset remained in the coach, which now proceeded

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at a slow pace, Wogan and the Princess walking after it side by side, and the other gentlemen following at a respectful distance. The wild adventure had come, as it seemed, to an end, and to some of the company the thought brought only regret.

XXVI

CARDINAL GUALTERIO AGAIN

THE great gardens of the Cardinal were among the most beautiful in Bologna. The Cardinal himself always maintained them to be the most beautiful. Great avenues of ancient trees led in all directions to spots of sylvan calm, or to spaces whose very formality had a charm. There were terraces adorned with the images of old-time gods and goddesses. There were groves where the greenness of the foliage was relieved by the whiteness of marble pedestals supporting the busts of the famous folk of the antique world, sages, statesmen, philosophers, poets. In that early spring the sound of the ceaseless fountains was pleasing to the ear, as the sight of the colored company of flowers was pleasing to the eye. The Cardinal piqued himself upon his happy taste in classical horticulture. Pliny, he felt sure, would have approved the proportions and the adornments of his gardens. Cicero would have delighted to stroll therein, conversing affably, had chronology so permitted, with Epicurus, and Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and St. Augustine. Truly it was a garden of gardens, a little Elysian

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Field all to itself, of which he, Cardinal Gualterio, was the happy shepherd.

In the heart of that charming garden the Cardinal had built himself a pavilion which was only a little less magnificent and a little less luxurious than the stately palace which prefaced the glory of those noble acres. In the palace Cardinal Gualterio was Cardinal Gualterio, the famous prelate, the urbane host, the distinguished scholar, the pre-eminent theologian—even, so some said who pretended to know better than their fellows, the amazing, daring politician who played with the forces of human life as cunningly and as cleverly as the chymist played with the drugs and unguents, the actions and reactions of the world of science. But in the wonderful, lovely pavilion Cardinal Gualterio was wont to permit himself to forget for the time being that he was Cardinal Gualterio, and to think of himself only as a brilliant, literate, infinitely accomplished man of the world, whose earliest training had been in arms, and whose affections were still keener for a well-balanced blade and a well-painted nymph than for the best conceived and delivered of all imaginable homilies, or the best argued thesis that ever set a synod of ecclesiastics by the ears. Cardinal Gualterio was a delightful man, but nobody, except Cardinal Gualterio, really knew how delightful he was.

Behold then our Cardinal, some days after the battle of Castel-Falcone, seated in the beautiful

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room of his beautiful pavilion, very busy with his secretary, Eusebio. The roof of the arched room in which he sat glittered with gilding and blazed with the jewelry of color. The cunningest fingers to handle brush and mix pigment in Italy had made the walls a glowing theatre of splendid and terrible events, terrestrial, infernal, and celestial. From the table where he sat at ease the Cardinal's gaze could comfortably travel along an admirable panorama of the great events of the world's fact and the world's fable, its mythology, its theology, its history. Frescoes that presented the story of the siege of Troy were succeeded by others that told of the doings of Saul or David or Samson. Here Daphne withered into laurel under the feet of pursuing Apollo; here Syrinx stiffened into reeds before the kisses of the goatish Pan; here the whimsical, mystical metamorphosis took place that made the lover of the Latin legend boy and maid in one. And hard by came splendid scenes that might have been magnified from the pages of a missal, where the Magi knelt beneath the sudden star, and the bearded doctors argued impotently with the Infant that was all wise. The Cardinal was, as he frankly admitted to his intimates—and it was his way to make all the world his intimate, or make all the world believe itself so—a man with many sides to his mind, that could be pleased and pacified by many kinds of food.

The Cardinal's room was terminated at one end

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by a row of slim pillars of red porphyry, which gave on to a terrace that overlooked the Cardinal's private garden, the garden within a garden, as it were, in which only those that for some reason or other were specially favored by the Cardinal—and his reasons for such favoring were many and various—ever had the good fortune to wander. Here the groves were the greenest and discreetest; here the statues were the whitest and their subjects the divinest; here the music of the fountains in their marble basins seemed the most melodious.

The Cardinal had his eyes fixed on the greenness of this garden through the crimsoned pillars as he listened with tranquillity to the voice of Eusebio, who was reading to him in a clear, sweet, slightly shrill voice the flowing periods of the sonorous Latin of one of the most eloquent and vehement of the early Fathers. The Cardinal listened to the reading with a countenance from which all expression was completely banished. On the handsome face whose features had been softened by time and ease from their early alertness an air of absolute repose and contentment reigned. The ringing periods, the fierce invectives, the passionate exultations of the theologian left him untroubled in his serene, equipoised, critical curiosity.

What the Cardinal was really thinking of behind that kindly mask of beatified interest had nothing at all to do with the lava of Tertullian. For the moment the great game of life had narrowed itself

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for him to a very small board, with very few pieces moving upon it, or to be moved upon it. First in rank of these pieces was the man who called himself, and whom the Cardinal was delighted to call, James the Third, King of England, Ireland, Scotland, and France, Defender of the Faith. The Cardinal would have preferred very much that James the Third was really James the Third, could really ever be James the Third. He was clearly convinced, in every corner of his cunning mind, that he never would be, never could be, anything of the kind. The Cardinal knew too much of England, too much of France, too much of Austria, too much of the world for that. But it suited him and the cause he served to keep that figure forward on the stage of the European puppet-play. The puppet might wear its crown awry; the puppet's enemies might nickname it "Mr. Melancholy," might babble brutally and foolishly enough of bastardy, might deride the pomposity, the pedantry, the precision of the man who claimed to be King of England; but the puppet was a useful piece to play with, and the Cardinal was prepared to play with him to the last moment when he was worth playing with.

Over the musing mind of the Cardinal there came the recollection of a letter that had been written a lustre earlier, a letter written by an Englishman that knew James Stuart well, to a friend in England. The writer of the letter was not of James Stuart's faith, but he admired James Stuart mightily and

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painted an admiring picture of the Prince. There was a copy of the letter in the Cardinal's archives, but he had no need to bid his secretary seek for it; what it said was stored in his memory.

"And first, for the person of the Chevalier which you desire to know; he is tall, straight, and clean limb'd, slender, yet his bones pretty large. He has a very graceful mien, walks fast, and his gait has great resemblance of his uncle, King Charles II., and the lines of his face grow daily more and more like him. He uses exercise more for health than diversion; he walks abroad, shoots, or hunts every day, but is not what they call a keen sportsman. Being asked what he most delighted in, he said it would be to hear wise men discourse upon useful subjects. He is always cheerful, but seldom merry; thoughtful, but not dejected, and bears his misfortunes with a visible magnanimity of spirit. He frequents the public devotions, but there is no sort of bigotry about him. He has a great application to business, spends much time in his closet, and writes much, which no man does better and more succinctly. His criticalness in the choice of words is much to be admired. He apprehends readily, and gives the direct answer.

"He is very affable, and has something strangely engaging in his voice and deportment, that none who ever converse with him but are charmed with his good sense and sweetness of temper. Nor can any take it ill even when he grants not their request, for

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he always gives such a reason as must satisfy. Yet he can show displeasure, but without anger. He expresses no resentment at the cruel proceedings of the last Parliament, to leave him no place to flee unto, but to drive him like the scapegoat unto a land not inhabited, with all the sins of the nation upon his head, to perish in the most miserable manner, unpitied, unrelieved. Other men were astonished, and said, for what all this rage? What has he done? Was it a crime to him to be born? If his birth was suppositious, it was a good reason indeed to bar his accession to the throne, but none to persecute him or put a price upon his head, as was proposed in Parliament by a rich and powerful party to encourage the assassination of him."

The Cardinal closed the book of his memory with a slight sigh. He had no need to reread further. Here was the portrait of an excellent gentleman, honest, upright, learned, just, filled with most of the private and many of the public virtues, a pattern and example of many merits, but not, as it would seem, the kingdom-winner. The Cardinal sighed again.

But the Cardinal was thinking of other figures, too, that for the moment had the supreme honor of tickling his susceptibilities far more than any king-claimant could hope to do. It was only a few days earlier that skittish fortune had whisked within the gates of Bologna city the most whimsical company of adventurers that had ever tripped across her

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threshold. Four fiery Irish paladins, for all the world like the four sons of Aymon in the ancient tale, had come in with a lovely princess in their midst, that had been kept in prison by Cæsar of Austria yonder, that she might not marry James Stuart, and that had been liberated, not as it seems without bloodshed, by the same four fiery Irish paladins.

The Cardinal recalled his conversation with the chief of these same paladins, with the Chevalier Charles Wogan, when the Chevalier Charles Wogan made bold to propose his astonishing scheme. The Cardinal recalled with gratification the fact that he had not opposed the plan. It seemed so preposterous, so ridiculous, so entirely the plan of a madman, that the Cardinal had assumed that it had had at least a creditable chance of success, and gave it his blessing. And now it had succeeded, which was great credit to the Chevalier Wogan, but even, all things considered, greater credit to the Cardinal Gualterio.

Across the Cardinal's musings there floated the face of a girl, very young, very beautiful, very valiant, very debonair. This was the face of the maid that had been so daring to break prison at Innspruck and ride that wild ride, with four Irish gentlemen and one Irish gentlewoman for her escort, to join her plighted bridegroom, King James the Third, in Italy. The shafts of the lightning of irony played now about the theatre of the Cardinal's thoughts. He surveyed in his imagination a pair standing be-

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fore him hand in hand, a woman and a man; the woman, this gallant, adventurous damsel, brimmed with the brisk spirits of youth and a daring temperament; the man, the precise, thoughtful, austere personage that called himself, and as the Cardinal judged had the right to call himself, King of England. If the Cardinal had sighed before over the theme of his reflections, now he allowed himself to smile, and almost immediately afterward suffered a frown to scatter the smile from his countenance. For, in spite of himself, in that theatre of his mental vision, he still saw a woman and a man standing together side by side, but though the woman was the same, the man was not the same.

The Cardinal could have wished that Providence in its wisdom had allowed certain things to happen otherwise than they had happened. He could have wished that James the Third, King of England, Ireland, Scotland, and France, Defender of the Faith, had been in Bologna to receive his beautiful bride that had been so gallantly rescued by splendid Irish gentlemen, by a splendid Irish gentleman in particular. He could have wished that the said James the Third had even been in Italy, to hurry swiftly to the presence of his bride, instead of being untimely located in Spain. It was true that the Prince was now travelling with all convenient speed to Italy and his queen; but the Cardinal resented his absence; the Cardinal even went so far as to murmur to himself a hackneyed French proverb which begins

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with the words *Les absents*. The French proverb did not accord well with the frenzy of Tertullian as it rippled from the suave lips of Eusebio. The Cardinal seemed to be listening to Tertullian, but in fact he was deaf to that Father's furies and rages. What he was really thinking of was far away from the invectives of the great enemy of Paganism. He was wondering if that dim and distant island which was called Ireland was capable of producing many men of the temper of Charles Wogan. If it were, he decided that it must have a great future before it.

XXVII

INTERLUDE

THUS the Cardinal dreamed his day-dreams, while the thunder of Tertullian seemed to hum about him no more harmful than the buzzing of a summer fly. From the garden the warm, soft air bore its exquisite burden of perfume to pleasure his sensitive nostrils. The trembling of the leaves was like the murmuring of many small, sweet voices. The lapsing of the fountain made a distant, delicious music. All the world of that Emilian spring seemed to be in a harmony of beauty, and the Cardinal delighted in beauty in all its manifestations.

Presently the Cardinal lifted his hand, and the secretary stopped reading in obedience to a familiar signal. The Cardinal sighed a little sigh of satisfaction. "Thank you," he said; "that is very refreshing and stimulating. Why cannot we devote all our lives to the study of the early Christian Fathers?"

He spoke as if he really meant what he said, and if the secretary had been a stranger, and not a familiar of many years' standing, he might have been

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inclined to take the Cardinal at his word. As it was, he listened with an impassive countenance while the great man continued. "But a poor prelate like myself," he said, "has duller work to do. He has to manage the affairs of Europe." The Cardinal gave a little sigh again, this time a sigh of amused dissatisfaction with his lot, and he pushed his white hands with apparent fretfulness among the papers in front of him. "So, with your permission," he went on, "we will take Europe in hand." The secretary replaced the volume of Tertullian on the shelf that ran round the wall and supported a goodly store of noble volumes that were not all theological.

"As your Eminence pleases," he answered.

The Cardinal shook his head with well-feigned impatience. "It is not at all as my Eminence pleases," he protested. "Who am I that I should manage or mismanage the affairs of Europe?"

The secretary bowed discreetly. "Your Eminence is a master mind," he declared.

The Cardinal smiled faintly. "I hope so," he said; "indeed, I think so; but there are others who do not." He shrugged his shoulders as he spoke.

The secretary was accustomed to these little, cheerful demonstrations on the Cardinal's part. He knew that the Cardinal was too complete a man ever to fail to keep up appearances even with his most intimate companions. "What will your Eminence deal with first?" he asked. "We have on

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our hands for immediate consideration, in the first place, Mistress Jane Gordon, that arrived last night, and, in the second place, the three Irish gentlemen, to whom your Eminence has certain important news to communicate."

The Cardinal smiled gracious approval of the formality of his secretary. "Well," he said, "let us reverse the proverb and take first pleasure and then business. At what time last night did this young lady, Mistress Jane Gordon, arrive?"

"Very late, your Eminence," Eusebio answered. "It was past twelve o'clock. She was brought here by some of the Duchess of Parma's people. The Duchess herself is waiting at Parma after her visit to Innsbruck, but will come on here in the course of a few days to visit her Highness and your Eminence."

The Cardinal nodded appreciation of his secretary's words. The Duchess of Parma was a sister of the Princess Sobieski, Clementina's mother.

Eusebio continued: "I conducted the young lady at once, as she desired, to the apartment of Mistress Misset. As the hour was so advanced, I did not conceive that it was necessary to disturb your Eminence."

"There you did right, Eusebio," the Cardinal answered, in a voice of profound conviction. "Sleep is a blissful condition which should not be lightly interrupted, and I am sure the charming young lady would agree—for I make no doubt she is charming—"

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He glanced quickly at his companion as he spoke, and the secretary answered austerely: "I was scarcely able to judge, your Eminence, but the young lady appeared to me to be comely."

"So much the better," the Cardinal answered, delicately applauding. "Beauty is a gift of the gods—of Heaven, I mean," he hastily corrected himself, "and should be always welcomed. The young lady will by now be recovered from the fatigue of the journey. Oblige me, Eusebio, by conveying word to her that if it would suit her to see me it would suit me to see her. Afterward I will receive the three Irish gentlemen."

Eusebio rose respectfully and, going to the door of the antechamber, called to the Cardinal's second secretary, Battista, that waited there, and gave him some whispered directions. Meanwhile, the Cardinal sat quietly in meditation, a pleasant smile on his face.

When Eusebio returned the Cardinal beamed pleasantly upon his penman. "I think, Eusebio," he said, complacently folding his fine hands together, "this business of his Majesty's marriage has been very happily handled."

Eusebio made him a little crisp salutation that suggested perfect acquiescence tempered with a sense of humorous appreciation of the Cardinal's fancy to be applauded. "Everything that your Eminence undertakes—" he began, but the Cardinal, who knew the kind of speech that was coming, cut him short.

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"Of course," he said, calmly, "I know perfectly well that I am a very clever old gentleman, but the laurels of this business are for no other brow than that of the Chevalier Wogan. I am a somewhat portly personage, Eusebio, but I swear to you that I could have skipped for joy like an infant when he came clattering in last week with our Princess Clementina on his arm, and his Irish friends behind him. Ah! those Irish are a wonderful people."

"The Chevalier Wogan," Eusebio observed, "is fortunate to be privileged to serve so fair a lady."

The Cardinal smiled, admiring the picture which his secretary's words conjured up. "She is very fair," he protested, "our runaway heroine, our divine, daring, dashing Clementina. She would have been the girl for me, Eusebio, if she had had the good taste to live fifty years earlier, or I the good taste to live fifty years later." The Cardinal paused, as if involved in his reflections. Then he directed a quizzical look at his secretary, and spoke again. "I know what you are thinking, Eusebio," he said, and he laughed gently as he said it.

Eusebio, who was not thinking of anything in particular, hastened to lodge his eager protest. "Indeed, your Eminence—" he began, but the good Cardinal did not give him time to go farther.

"You are thinking, you rogue," he insisted, "that for a girl so fair and gay and gracious his Majesty the King of England—who is not King of Eng-

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land—is something too solemn and ponderous a spouse.”

Eusebio made a little shocked movement of protestation, uttered a little shocked protest with his lips. “Indeed, your Eminence,” he asserted, earnestly, “I thought no such thought.”

The Cardinal laughed a little soft, purring laugh as he listened to his henchman’s denegation. There was something cat-like about him, Eusebio admitted to himself, as he sat there so quiet, so contented, so full of unexpressed menace. The Cardinal blinked amiably at his secretary for a few seconds; then he spoke with a tone of lazy interest. “What is it,” he questioned, “that they call his Majesty King James the Third of England, France, and all the rest of it, behind his august back?”

Eusebio hesitated, coughed a little to cover his hesitation, and then, seeing that the Cardinal desired an answer, answered. “I believe,” he said, diffidently, “that indifferent or flippant people sometimes allude to him as Mr. Melancholy.”

The Cardinal caught at the arms of his chair with his fine, firm fingers and laughed almost lustily. “There you are!” he cried. “Mr. Melancholy and Clementina. Shadow and star-fire. Dirge and mirth. Heaven help the pair of them! I cannot; for they have got to marry and establish the Stuart succession, poor fools!”

Eusebio’s embarrassment at the Cardinal’s frankness was here happily covered by the entrance into

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the room of his colleague and subordinate, Battista, escorting Mistress Jane Gordon. Instantly, at a gesture from the Cardinal, the two young men retired into the antechamber, leaving the churchman alone with the girl.

The girl was looking very fair and gay and dainty, and the Cardinal gave her a look of frank admiration as, rising, he extended his hand for her to kiss. The girl did so rather nervously, but the Cardinal's gracious manner quickly helped to set her at her ease, and to act with the frankness natural to her.

"Welcome to Bologna and to safety, my dear child," he said; "you are a brave girl and quite a heroine with us, I assure you."

Jane flushed with pleasure at the Cardinal's words, but she affected to make light of her adventures. "Oh, it was nothing," she said, resolutely. "I was really in no great danger at Innsbruck, though for a while I felt pretty uncomfortable."

The Cardinal leaned back in his chair and motioned to Jane to be seated. "Tell me," he said, amiably, "what happened after the departure of the Princess?"

Jane began to laugh, and then, suddenly recollecting the Cardinal's presence, pulled herself up and looked grave again as befitted a heroine of a historical episode. "Oh, there was the rarest scene in the morning," she said. "You must know, I went to bed very early and slept very late,

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and no pretence, neither, for I am monstrous fond of sleep. I was wakened sometime in the morning by a clatter of angry feet and a chatter of angry voices, and then a rude man that was the Governor of Innspruck bounced into my bedroom in a towering rage. I huddled up in the clothes, but he stood on no ceremony and twisted my head round till he saw my face. Then there was a pother, if you like."

"Why, what happened?" asked the Cardinal, playfully inquisitive.

"Why," Jane responded, "I had to dress in a great hurry and go down and be questioned by the Governor and a man they called the Prince of Niemmen and a stiff and stupid Englishman named Wynstock. They questioned me, but I could tell them nothing, and would tell them nothing except that the Princess had gone away, and that I did not know why she had gone away or where she had gone away. Then the Prince and the Englishman hurried away, as I guess, in pursuit of my precious fugitives, and after a while I had another interview with the Governor, who bullied me very brutally for a bit, and threatened to do all sorts of terrible things to me."

Jane colored very prettily as she remembered General Heister's menaces, and for a moment she made a mask of her lifted hands to hide her blushing face, while she peeped at the Cardinal through parted fingers. The Cardinal smiled sympatheti-

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cally and ironically. Jane dropped her hands and continued:

"Just in the very thick of all the pother, when every beastly Austrian official in the place was doing his best to make the life of the poor Princess Sobieski quite unbearable, who should turn up in the nick of time but the Duchess of Parma, a great lady that is own sister to the Princess, and that was, it seems, travelling to visit her after a sojourn to Vienna. Of course, the Duchess knew nothing at all of what was toward, but when she came with all her state and retinue she knew how to make herself respected, I promise you, and the condition of things changed very quickly. The long and the short of it was that the Duchess of Parma resolved to go on to Italy after a day with her sister in Innspruck, and her influence was so great that she persuaded General Heister to let her take me with her. At Parma, where she halted to rest, she graciously sent me on, and here I am."

The Cardinal smiled approval. "You did very well," he said, "and the Princess is very grateful to you."

Even her respect for an illustrious prince did not prevent Jane from making a little face of protest. "I did not do it to serve the Princess, I promise you," she said.

"No?" the Cardinal commented, slyly. "Well, all your friends are here, and Monsieur O'Toole is a man any woman could be proud of."

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Jane raised her eyebrows at the name and stared hard at the Cardinal. "O'Toole, indeed!" she said, scornfully. "What has that booby been saying about me?"

"Booby!" the Cardinal echoed Jane's offensive word in surprise, while he uplifted his white hands. "Alas! poor O'Toole. He lives in a fool's paradise then."

"A fit place for him," Jane said, tartly. "I would not marry him if he walked on his knees for a week asking me. I like a man who is soft of speech and quiet of carriage, who is comely and brave, and does great things as if they were little things—" She paused as if to find breath for further phrases in praise of her ideal man.

The Cardinal, taking advantage of her halt, interpolated, speaking slowly as if thinking aloud: "The Chevalier Wogan is undoubtedly a remarkable man."

Jane instantly looked confused and crimsoned whimsically. "Who said a word about Charles Wogan?" she asked, sharply.

"Well, it certainly sounded—" the Cardinal suggested, blandly, leaving much to the imagination.

"Oh, very well then," Jane retorted, accepting fully the innuendo. "I'm not ashamed of it. Charles Wogan has always been the prince of my dreams."

"I don't wonder," the Cardinal said, sympathetically. "But what a trial to marry one's ideal

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prince. Only think of it!" He held up his hands in horror as he spoke. "Always to be on one's best behavior. You feel inclined to lose your temper. You must not. What would your ideal prince think if he saw you with a cross face?"

"I must be cross sometimes," Jane pleaded.

But the Cardinal was not to be persuaded out of his argument. "Not before the prince," he protested. "What an existence! It would be like living forever in court clothes. Imagine your prince seeing you in curl-papers."

Jane involuntarily put her hands to her head at the idea. "Mercy!" she cried.

The Cardinal laughed triumphantly. "Aha! you do wear them then?" he exulted. "Now, whatever your ideal prince might think, I am sure a lover like O'Toole would think you beautiful in them."

"I certainly can do what I like with O'Toole," Jane admitted. "And I know very well I can do nothing with Charles Wogan, for he is in love—" She paused.

"Indeed! With whom?" the Cardinal questioned, quickly, as if he hoped by quickness to catch Jane unawares.

Jane hesitated. "Oh, with somebody," she said, at length; "somebody whom he will always love."

"Then, in that case," the Cardinal asked, "why not think kindly of our poor O'Toole? He would make a perfect husband."

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"I do not want a perfect husband," Jane began, restively, but the Cardinal interrupted her.

He rose with that air of quiet command which was so very convincing with him and took her by the hand. "Now, little Jane," he ordered, taking her to the line of porphyry pillars and indicating to her the spaces of gracious pleasantries that lay beyond them, all green and gold and many colors, 'I want you to go to the fountain in the garden yonder and walk seven times round it, or eight times, or even more, until I send for you.'

Jane, instantly obedient, stooped and kissed the ring on the Cardinal's extended hand and then ran lightly out into the garden and disappeared from view, tripping springily into the sweet distances.

The Cardinal, left alone, touched a golden bell on his table, and instantly Eusebio entered the room. The Cardinal turned to his secretary. "Now for the three Irish gentlemen, Eusebio," he ordered.

"Shall I tell them to come?" Eusebio questioned.

The Cardinal gently reproved him with delicately lifted eyebrows. "Ask, my dear Eusebio, ask."

Eusebio bowed, blushing with humiliation at the correction. "Yes, your Eminence," he said, apologetically.

Once again he turned to the antechamber and gave certain whispered instructions to Battista. Once again there was an interval of expectation, an interval which was this time employed by the Cardinal, not in conversation, but in a fit of medita-

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tion, which Eusebio was careful to respect. Some ten minutes had thus passed in silence, when the door of the antechamber opened anew and Battista, appearing, ushered into the Cardinal's presence the three Irishmen that were his guests. Gaydon, Misset, and O'Toole each in turn knelt to kiss the Cardinal's ring, and each in turn was quickly motioned to an erect position by the urbane churchman. Then a glance from the Cardinal caused Eusebio to disappear, and the Cardinal was left alone with the adventurers.

The Cardinal shone on the three soldiers with an air of great benevolence. His fine white hands were clasped together, and he leaned back in his chair with the air of a complacent schoolmaster about to confer his approbation upon deserving scholars.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am glad to tell you that by advices which I have received from his Majesty King James the Third, whom Heaven preserve, and who is now travelling with all speed hither, that his Majesty has been pleased in his loving-kindness to such faithful subjects as you have proved yourselves to be to promote each of you, as well as your leader, Charles Wogan, to a higher military rank than that which you already hold."

The Cardinal paused for a moment, eying with approval the satisfaction of his hearers; then he continued as if by way of afterthought. "It is true that his Majesty is not at present in command

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of any army, but his Majesty's good intentions are significant."

"God save the King!" ejaculated O'Toole, sturdily.

Gaydon leaned a little forward and spoke. "It is to be hoped," he said, "that ere long his Majesty will be reviewing his own troops in his own kingdom."

"It is devoutly to be hoped," the Cardinal replied. He closed his eyes for a moment, as if to consider the probability, then he opened them again and went on. "I have further to inform you that the authorities of Rome, acting on the advice of the Holy Father, have decided to enroll your names and the name of your companion and compatriot, the Chevalier Wogan, on the golden roll-call of Roman Senatorship. You are indeed fortunate in receiving this signal mark of favor, which, while it brings with it no merely worldly advantage, yet is surely to be held beyond price. Wherever you go hereafter, and whatever may befall you, it is your proud privilege to say with absolute accuracy, '*Civis Romanus sum*': 'I am a Roman citizen.'"

O'Toole slapped his leg lustily. "Sure, there's a kind of pride in it, too!" he said.

Misset looked pleased. "I am certain, your Eminence," he said, "that when I was parsing my Cordery at school I never dreamed that in days to come I should have the right to call myself a Roman Senator."

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"Well, gentlemen," said the Cardinal, affably, "I must not allow myself to keep you from enjoying such pleasures as Bologna can afford to its visitors. You deserve and you need all the relaxation you can get after your heroic enterprise. I trust that you find your lodging comfortable."

Gaydon and Misset assured his Eminence that they had been well cared for by his Eminence's household. As they, after due genuflection, quitted the august presence, the Cardinal beckoned to O'Toole, that was the last to pass out, and detained him, while his companions disappeared. O'Toole, amazed at this unexpected compliment, gaped at the great man, who smiled at him with a smile that, as the honest soldier could not help thinking, had a faint air of waggishness in it.

"I have need of your society for a little longer," he said, benignly.

O'Toole made his Eminence a most noble salutation. "I am ever at your Eminence's service," he declared, resonantly.

The Cardinal looked enigmatic. "I suppose you know," he said, insinuatingly, "that a certain young lady arrived here last night."

O'Toole's large, honest face became the color of a poppy. "I would not deceive your Eminence for the world," he declared. "I have heard that same."

"But, as I think," the Cardinal continued, "you have not yet seen her?"

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O'Toole shook his head and looked gloomy in spite of his crimson cheeks. "I have not," he admitted. He paused for a minute, and then went on in a burst of confidential candor. "You see, it is this way, your Eminence: I have a mighty fine fancy for the girl, but she has mighty little fancy for me, or no fancy at all, maybe, and the last time that I saw her she made it plain that she thought no more of me than of the dirt beneath her feet. So I do not see what good it would be for either of us, anyway, my seeing her again."

"Major O'Toole," said the Cardinal, approvingly, and conferring upon him the title which had just been announced, "you speak very wisely, which, indeed, is no other than fitting on the part of a man that has the right to call himself a Roman Senator. But even a Roman Senator does not always understand a woman, and if I were in your place, as indeed, my dear man, I heartily wish I were, I think I should try my luck again."

He eyed the giant with patent admiration as he spoke. Perhaps, indeed, he did think not unregretfully of the days when he could use sword and woo girl with the best.

O'Toole stared at him. "Your Eminence—" he began, but the Cardinal interrupted.

"Will you kindly go," he commanded, "toward yonder terrace and tell me what you see in the garden?"

O'Toole obediently advanced toward the pillars

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of porphyry and peeped through them. What he saw was a glorious garden, and some little distance off a fountain with a large basin, and round that basin Jane Gordon walking briskly.

"If I were you," counselled the voice of the Cardinal, from behind him, "I should go into the garden and talk with that young lady. Remember that you are one of the heroes of the adventure of Innspruck; remember also that you are a major in rank, and a Roman Senator; remember further that you have my blessing. If you succeed in your suit bring the lady back with you, and she, too, shall gain my benediction."

O'Toole turned and stammered some words of grateful thanks as he knelt and kissed the Cardinal's extended hand. Then he rose, and with a look of puzzled desperation passed through the porphyry pillars on to the terrace, and so into the green and gracious garden.

The Cardinal shifted his chair to a position which commanded a view of the garden and its occupants. Here was a little snatch of comedy that it amused him to witness.

XXVIII

A FORM OF SURRENDER

O'TOOLE went across the soft grass and the smooth paths in the direction of the fountain. It seemed to him that he was walking in a dream in which he was obeying the dictates of a stronger will than his own. As he reached the great marble basin that cupped the fountain Jane heard his footsteps and turned and recognized him. O'Toole went toward her, calling her by her name.

Jane made a wry face. "Oh, it's you?" she said, and the tone of her voice did not seem propitious, but O'Toole, inspired by the counsels of the Cardinal, made bold to hold his own.

"Yes," he answered, "it's me, and yet it is not me, if you understand my meaning."

Jane stared at him and shook her head vehemently in denial of all understanding. "What are you talking about?" she asked, querulously.

O'Toole tapped himself on the chest. "It's the changed man I am," he asserted.

Jane rubbed her hands together maliciously and looked pleased. "That's no bad hearing," she said,

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significantly, but the significance was lost, or seemed to be lost, upon O'Toole.

"And I only knew it this morning, Jane," he went on, enthusiastically; "they have made me a Roman Senator."

Jane shrugged her shoulders. "What is the good of that?" she said.

O'Toole held up his hands in astonishment. "Good of it?" he repeated. "Listen to the dear simpleton. Sure it sticks me in the same catalogue with Julius Cæsar, and Numa Pompilius, and Heaven knows who else besides. Wherever I go, and whatever may happen to me, I can always place my hand proudly on my chest and say, '*Civis Romanus sum.*'"

Jane cocked her head on one side and looked at him ironically. "What does it mean when you have said it?" she asked.

O'Toole explained. "It means, 'I am a Roman citizen.' It signifies that I have the right, if I like, to go about with a toga on my shoulders and sandals on my bare feet."

Jane laughed derisively. "A pretty figure of fun you would cut!" she asserted.

"Do you like me better as I am?" O'Toole asked, insinuatingly.

Jane shook her head more determinedly than ever. "I don't like you at all," she persisted.

O'Toole's tone of insinuation turned to one of vehement entreaty. "Ah! don't say that, Jane,"

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he appealed; "for love's sake don't say that. Sure you must find it in your heart to like me a little, me that loves you so much."

Jane eyed him quizzically. "How much do you love me?" she questioned.

O'Toole stretched out his arms as if he were endeavoring to embrace the whole world, and Jane included. "How much do I love you, is it?" he asked. "Sure I don't think there can be any love left in the world, I've taken so much of it to lay at your darling feet. Jane, my angel, do say that you like me a little?"

Jane frowned. "Is it telling lies you'd be having me?" she said, sourly.

O'Toole came a little nearer to her. "I want you," he said, softly, "to tell me the truth, and I want that same truth to be that you like me a little, and maybe more than a little."

Jane made a grimace. "Oh, I like you well enough when you're not by," she admitted.

O'Toole shook a finger at her reproachfully. "Now that's a hard saying," he said, "for it's my delight in life to be by your side. Can't I persuade you to like my company a little?"

In spite of herself, Jane allowed her face to soften somewhat. "Well," she said, hesitatingly, "perhaps a little, just a very little." Then as she noticed that her slight encouragement seemed to suggest an immediate attack on the part of her wooer, she thrust out her hands to hold him back. "Now,

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keep off," she commanded; "keep your distance, or you'll be asking me to kiss you next."

O'Toole stood still. "I've got something else to ask you first," he said, gravely; "I've got to ask you if you could ever like me well enough to consent to be my wife?"

Jane looked at her lover with well-assumed astonishment. "Now what will the man be asking next?" she asked.

"I'll tell you that," O'Toole answered, "when you've answered me this."

"What?" Jane questioned.

O'Toole held out his hands appealingly. "Jane, precious Jane, will you marry me?"

Jane shook her head; then she spoke. "Oh, I don't know," she said. "You are not a bit the husband I'd imagined. Would you let me have my own way in everything?"

"Of course," O'Toole answered, promptly.

"And do exactly as I tell you?" the girl continued.

"Yes," O'Toole said, emphatically.

"And love and dote on me forever?" Jane went on. "And think me the loveliest woman on earth, and the sweetest and best tempered?"

"Why, of course," O'Toole protested, cheerfully.

"Well—then—" Jane hesitated, then suddenly seemed to become firm. "No, I don't think I can marry you," she asserted.

"That means you will," O'Toole shouted, joy-

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fully, and before Jane could divine his intention he had caught her in his arms and kissed her.

In a moment she extricated herself. "Oh, take that!" she said, and gave him a lusty slap on the cheek with the palm of her hand. Instantly she ran off into the deeps of the garden, with O'Toole in hot pursuit. Apparently, however, the pursuit was neither a long nor a stern one, for in a few minutes the watchful Cardinal saw the pair emerge from the bosage arm in arm, and apparently very well contented with each other. They passed the dancing fountain; they crossed the smooth paths and the soft grass, and they came into the presence of the Cardinal and fell on their knees before him.

"Will your Eminence," said O'Toole, boldly, "be pleased to give your blessing to this bold girl that is going to be my wife, Mistress Major O'Toole no less, and a Roman Senatoress by the same token?"

The Cardinal, smiling like a gratified child, preached them a short homily on marriage that seemed somehow quite unlike what any one else would have thought of preaching, but which was very tender and pleasant and penetrating to hear.

"We have all," he said, in conclusion, "in the lives we leave behind us on the threshold of this coming sacrament things that we regret because they did happen, and things we regret because they did not happen."

Jane's cheeks reddened as she listened. O'Toole nodded his honest head with all the greater air of

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wisdom because he did not in the least take the Cardinal's meaning.

The Cardinal continued: "Such things, perhaps, it may neither be possible nor well for us to forget, but it were wise not to remember them too frequently or too keenly."

Thereupon he gave the pair his blessing and dismissed them, telling them to carry the happy news to Mistress Misset. When they had gone the Cardinal touched his bell and Eusebio returned to the room. The Cardinal looked at his secretary with a smile.

"My good Eusebio," he said, "it is really not so difficult as it seems to manage humanity. In nine cases out of ten if you suggest a thing to an individual, man or woman, in the right way, he or she will act upon the suggestion."

Eusebio could venture to trifle with the Cardinal when he was in this light humor. "Would it be effective," he asked, slyly, "if I were to suggest to your Eminence that he should double my salary?"

The Cardinal shook his head briskly. "That," he said, decisively, "would not be the right way, my good Eusebio."

XXIX

THE PRINCE IN PURSUIT

THE Cardinal settled himself comfortably in his chair. "My good Eusebio," he said, "I expect presently to have a little conversation with the head of these wild, delightful Irishmen."

"Your Eminence," observed Eusebio, sagaciously, "means the Chevalier Wogan."

The Cardinal smiled upon Eusebio as Ferdinand of Aragon might have smiled upon Columbus when he informed that monarch of the discovery of a new world.

"My son," he said, very paternally, "you are in the right of it. I wish to give the Chevalier a special audience in order to inform him of the honor which has been paid him by the Roman Senate. Of course, he knows all about it already, but I always desire to observe due formalities."

Eusebio smiled a chaste approval of the Cardinal's punctilio. The Cardinal, ignoring the smile, continued:

"I have asked her Highness to favor me with an interview at about the same time. I wish, for certain reasons, that her Highness and my Irishman

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should meet here. They have scarcely met in private since their arrival, I believe."

Eusebio confirmed the Cardinal's belief. "Her Highness has had no private interview with the Chevalier Wogan since her arrival."

The Cardinal rubbed his hands approvingly. "Good!" he approved. "Good!" He rustled among the papers in front of him. "My latest advices from King James report him at Rome. I expect further news to-day."

"If I were his Majesty," Eusebio hazarded, "I would travel fast with such a bride awaiting me."

The Cardinal nodded agreement. He took up a pen and began to write, and Eusebio busied himself with his own work. Presently the private door opened and Battista came into the room, and, advancing toward Eusebio, whispered a few words into his ear. Eusebio addressed the Cardinal. "His Highness the Prince of Niemen," he said, "requests the honor of an interview with your Eminence."

The Cardinal brought the tips of his fingers together and looked thoughtfully at his secretary. "What," he said, innocently, "do we know about this Prince of Niemen?"

Eusebio gave the explanation which he knew to be unnecessary. "The Prince of Niemen," he said, "is the individual whom the British Government chose to marry the Princess Clementina."

The Cardinal nodded his head. "True, true!"

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he commented. "Well, we cannot always have what we want in this world, not even German princes and British governments. You may admit the gentleman."

Eusebio made a gesture to Battista, who quitted the room. Then the Cardinal beckoned to Eusebio and instructed him in a whisper—principally, as it would seem, because there was not the slightest occasion to whisper—to seek out the Chevalier Wogan at once and to bring him immediately to audience, as he had no doubt that the visit of the Prince of Niemen had something to do with the affair of Innspruck and the flight of Clementina. When Wogan was in the antechamber Eusebio was to knock three times at the door, and then if the Cardinal summoned him was to admit the Chevalier. Eusebio nodded and disappeared. The Cardinal, left alone, smiled the smile of a man who has so arranged his changes in some game of speculation that whatever happens he stands to win. A few moments later Battista returned and introduced the Prince of Niemen, who made a profound salutation to the Cardinal. Then Battista retired, leaving the Prince and the Cardinal alone together.

The Cardinal smiled amiably upon his visitor. "How can we serve your Highness?" he asked, benignly.

Niemen immediately answered by another question. "I suppose," he said, "your Eminence may guess why I am here?"

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The Cardinal shook his head. "I never guess," he stated, quietly, "I know. You come because you are vexed at the loss of your promised bride."

Niemen's face flushed angrily. The affable composure of the Cardinal seemed to be irritating to him. "Princess Clementina was promised to me," he complained. "You wish her to marry James Stuart."

The Cardinal shrugged his shoulders. "What have my wishes to do with the matter?" he asked. "The Princess wishes it; King James wishes it."

Niemen protested vehemently. "King James, as you call him, would not wish it long if he knew what I know."

The Cardinal looked mildly surprised. "Indeed!" he said.

"Your Eminence," Niemen continued, "has influence enough to stop this marriage if you choose. Stop the marriage and I hold my tongue."

Again the Cardinal shook his head. "I do not understand," he declared, blandly. "Why should your Highness hold his tongue? I have no desire to check its utterance."

Niemen came a little nearer to the table at which the Cardinal was sitting, and resting his hand on it, leaned over and spoke slowly. "If I speak what I think," he said, "if I speak what I know, the marriage will never take place."

The Cardinal did not seem to be much impressed by the earnestness of the Prince. "Then, I hope,"

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he said, calmly, "you will not speak what you think—or know."

"That," Niemen asserted, truculently, suddenly flushed with the hope of bullying this easy-going ecclesiastic into acquiescence with his wishes—"that depends entirely upon you. You know as well as I do that James Stuart will never be King of England. Therefore, this marriage of his can be of no moment to you. You can stop it privately. I can do it publicly. It is for you to decide."

The Cardinal paused in what appeared to be an interested study of the palms of his plump, white hands. He lifted his head and surveyed his visitor with an air of mild surprise. "Your Highness," he said, in a tone of gentle reproof, "singularly misunderstands me if he believes that I claim to have the power of deciding any matter on this planet that is not governed by human laws."

He seemed to be about to say more, but at that instant his ear caught the sound of three gentle taps at the private door. He looked at the Prince of Niemen with something like a twinkle in his eye.

"It is not for me to decide anything," he affirmed, and then he touched his golden bell.

As he spoke Eusebio appeared in the doorway, but the Cardinal made him a sign, and the secretary disappeared. The Cardinal turned again to the Prince. "Forgive me," he said, "if I interrupt our interesting conversation for a moment." He

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sat for a few seconds looking steadily at Niemen with an inscrutable expression on his face.

The silence was broken by the entrance of Wogan, who could not restrain a look of astonishment when he saw the Prince of Niemen standing before him in the Cardinal's presence, with a sinister smile upon his unamiable face. As Wogan stared at him the Prince spoke.

"I suppose," he said, "you are surprised to see me here, my dear Chevalier, but the roads of Italy are as free to me as to another, and if it pleases my fancy to travel to Bologna, I take it that you will scarcely make any objection to my doing so."

Wogan shrugged his shoulders. "Your movements, your Highness," he said, "are of no concern to me since I had the pleasure of baffling you at Castel-Falcone. You can do no harm now, and the only favor I should ask of you is that which Diogenes requested of Alexander, to stand out of my sunlight."

The Prince laughed disagreeably. "Really, Chevalier," he said, "I think you underrate my powers of doing harm. Are you vain enough to fancy that because you succeeded in interfering with my plans awhile back I am incapable of interfering with your plans to-day?"

Wogan looked at the Prince with a certain quickened curiosity. The man, as he stood there, his evil face troubled by an evil smile, seemed such a baleful presence that Wogan felt a physical re-

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pulsion at the sight. He was not alarmed by the menaces of the man, but he was curious to know what those menaces might mean.

"I should never," he replied, coldly, "for a moment question your Highness's desire to injure those whom you consider your enemies, but I very much question your power to do so at this present."

The Prince laughed again softly to himself. He seemed like one that savors a secret joke and lingers over it lovingly in thought, unwilling to share his satisfaction with another. "Chevalier," he said, sneeringly, "did you ever hear the story of Francesca of Rimini?"

Wogan shook his head. He knew little of Italian literature, little of Italian history. His own busy time absorbed all his interests.

The Prince proceeded to explain: "Francesca of Rimini was a beautiful girl who lived many centuries ago. She was sought in marriage by a great prince, who sent as his ambassador a comely youth. The fair lady fell in love with the comely youth, and the comely youth fell in love with the fair lady. Between them they played the great prince false, and the matter ended in tragedy."

Wogan began to have some idea now of what the Prince would be at. "Well," he said, slowly, "what has your story to do with me?"

"History," said the Prince, significantly, "has a way of repeating itself. I think I have heard very lately of a great prince who sent a comely young

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gentleman as his envoy to the lovely lady his Highness was a-wooing. It would be, I think, the business of a true friend of that prince to tell him the story of Francesca of Rimini." He turned to the Cardinal. "Does not your Eminence agree with me?" he questioned.

Wogan also looked at the Cardinal, who had been following the conversation of the pair with an amused smile. He spoke now, not to Niemen, but to Wogan. "My poor Chevalier," he said, "it seems that all your efforts have been in vain, and your rescue of the Princess useless."

Wogan looked from the Cardinal to the Prince, and from the Prince to the Cardinal, dreading the danger he guessed.

The Cardinal indicated the Prince by an inclination of his head. "This gentleman," he said, "intends to stop the royal marriage by some mysterious means."

"Not mysterious," Niemen said, insolently. "Your King James will hardly welcome a bride already soiled ere she reach him. This fellow has been too much for her maidenhood."

Wogan instantly made a movement toward the Prince, a movement which the lifted hand of the Cardinal immediately checked. "You lie!" he said.

The Cardinal looked at the Prince. "Indeed, Prince," he said, "I hope and believe that you are lying."

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Niemen struck the table with his closed fist. "They love each other," he protested. "By God! they love each other. You have only to look at them."

The Cardinal stroked his chin. "Your Highness is observant," he said, quietly.

Niemen pointed fiercely at Wogan. "Look at the man!" he cried. "Ask the man! He cannot deny it!"

There was a moment's silence. Then Wogan addressed the Cardinal. "Have I," he asked, calmly, "your Eminence's permission to speak with some frankness to his Highness?"

"Certainly," the Cardinal answered, with an air of cordial approval.

Wogan advanced toward Niemen. "Your Highness," he said, "wears his cravat in a damned ill-conditioned way."

As he spoke he caught Niemen by his lace cravat, unfastening it, and swung him a little this way and that, then gave him a push that sent him staggering across the room.

"Damn you!" Niemen screamed, and put his hand to his sword.

The Cardinal rose to his feet. "Gentlemen, gentlemen," he said, softly, "a difference of opinion on so delicate a question as dress can only be settled by consultation with one's friends. In the days before I became a humble and unworthy member of the church I lived a carnal life and was, as I

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recall, very particular about the nicety of my apparel. I am sure that if any person had presumed to question the accuracy of my taste in cravats I should, being then unregenerate, have insisted on the satisfaction that one man of honor who considers himself an authority upon dress would naturally demand of another man of honor who also considers himself an authority upon dress. That was in my unregenerate days. I hope, my friends, that you two cherish no such foolish punctiliousness about a question of personal adornment. But if you do, there is still so much of the old Adam in me as compels me to suggest that there is a very pleasant meadow, just beyond the Campo Santo, where any little trifling dispute of this kind could be most comfortably, quietly, and privately adjusted."

Niemen looked from the smiling face of the Cardinal to the scornful face of Wogan. "I have not the slightest unwillingness," he said, "to rid the world of this Irish adventurer if your Eminence wishes it."

The Cardinal shook his head vigorously. "I wish you both to shake hands and be friends for life," he protested, "but as I see little prospect of so desirable a conclusion to a trivial altercation, I can do no better than leave the matter in your own hands." He touched the golden bell, and Eusebio entered the room. "Summon Battista," the Cardinal commanded.

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When Battista appeared the Cardinal gravely presented his two secretaries to the Prince of Niemen as gentlemen of the noble Italian blood that honored him by their aid, and that would be delighted to second the Prince, as a stranger in the town, with any help they could give toward the solution of the great problem of how a cravat should properly be tied. The Cardinal then suggested that a couple of Wogan's comrades could render the like service by him. The Prince and Wogan agreeing to these propositions, Battista was dispatched in search of Wogan's friends, while Eusebio offered to conduct his Highness to the pleasant meadow of which the Cardinal had spoken. Niemen accepted; then he turned and addressed Wogan:

"I warn you," he said, "that I fight after the Italian fashion, very disconcerting to the ignorant."

Wogan answered him affably. "I warn you," he said, "that I fight after the Irish fashion, very disconcerting to the learned."

The Prince of Niemen took his leave of the Cardinal with a proper regard for ceremonial. As Wogan in his turn was departing the Cardinal requested him, if he should happen to be disengaged after the meeting, to return to the palace, as he had a few private words of some slight importance to change with him. Wogan thanked his Eminence for his command and quitted the presence. When he was gone, the Cardinal, left alone,

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smiled and daintily pressed his finger-tips together.

"Whatever happens," he said to himself, contentedly, "I shall be relieved of one of my difficulties."

XXX

NIEMEN STANDS ASIDE

THE only regret that clouded Major O'Toole's memory of his first day of authorized courting was that, in consequence, he was absent from the palace when the Signor Battista came seeking the Chevalier Wogan's comrades at their lodgings therein. O'Toole had gone to take the air in the town with his sweetheart, and did not return until the whole matter was over and done with.

Gaydon and Misset accompanied Wogan to the place of meeting, the meadow suggested by the Cardinal. Eusebio and Battista did their friendly offices for the Prince of Niemen. The meadow was quite as pleasant and quiet and private as the Cardinal had given the disputants to believe, and the arrangements were very speedily made after the briefest conference between the two officers of Dillon's and the two gentlemen of the Cardinal's household. The ground was good; the light equable; nothing, the two pairs of seconds agreed, could be more propitious for an encounter. The Prince of Niemen carried himself with the tranquillity of a man that was confident of success.

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Wogan showed no sign of any emotion, but he knew in his heart that he was fighting for Clementina, and that he meant to fight well. Under these conditions the duel began.

It was evident from the first that Niemen relied very much upon his command of the Italian fashion of fencing. The arm extended almost straight, together with the unusual length of his sword, did, indeed, give him an advantage over an unpractised adversary, or one wholly unfamiliar with the peculiar method of defence and attack. It was this unfamiliarity that had proved so disastrous to O'Toole on the occasion when he had measured himself against the Prince's sword. But Wogan had practised himself in many ways of fencing, and, besides, he was warned by O'Toole's example, and too cool-headed to be taken unawares. He kept himself on the defensive for a few passes, until his quick wit enabled him to appreciate his enemy's method and his enemy's intentions. He was a better swordsman than Niemen, and because he was determined to succeed he allowed no remissness nor rashness to give any advantage to his antagonist.

In a little time Wogan's attitude seemed to irritate the Prince, and irritation made him attack too vehemently. After the Prince had failed to deceive him by a cunning feint, Wogan bound his blade with his own, aiming a low, downward thrust, which the Prince sought to parry. Wogan avoided the parry by a thrust up, and ran the Prince through

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the body. His sword dropped from his hand, and he fell into the arms of Battista, who lowered him to the grass.

Eusebio bent over him and turned to Wogan. "He is dead!" he said.

"I will not pretend to regret him," Wogan answered. Wiping his sword, he returned it to its sheath and made his way toward the palace, accompanied by Gaydon and Misset, leaving the Cardinal's secretaries to make the necessary arrangements for the removal of the Prince.

XXXI

IN THE PAVILION OF VENUS

WOGAN had a great familiarity with affairs of honor, but he had never been one that loved brawling for the brawl's sake, and though in action he cheerfully disregarded his own life and the lives of any or all of his adversaries, he entertained a certain fine-drawn unwillingness to give a mortal ending to a *duello* if it might, with credit, be avoided. In the case of Niemen, however, his only thought was one of satisfaction that such a fathomless rascal was swept away from the path of the sweet Princess for good and all. But, indeed, he gave very little thought to the matter now that it was over. The accomplished deed, especially if it had been well worth the doing, needed no longer to cumber the mind that had other things to think of.

When Wogan reached the palace he was told that his Eminence requested his presence in the Pavilion of Venus, to which, after taking leave of his two friends, he directed his steps. The Pavilion of Venus was a little marble temple in the Cardinal's private garden, not far from the fountain around which his Eminence had instructed Jane to wander.

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The temple had its name because it enshrined a very beautiful bronze image of Venus belonging to the loveliest period of Greek art. The superstitious were inclined to regard the statue with disapproval, because it was currently reported to have been the cause of misfortune to many of its possessors. It had, at one time, belonged to the famous Cæsar Borgia, who had obtained it at a strange price from one of his enemies of the house of Orsini, and shortly after obtaining it ruin came upon Cæsar Borgia. The Cardinal Gualterio so far permitted a popular prejudice to triumph over connoisseurship as to shelter the image in a temple in his grounds instead of housing it in one of his galleries.

Wogan had heard of the Venus, and was not displeased to be afforded the chance of seeing it; so he went nimbly through the Cardinal's garden toward the place where the white pillars of the temple showed brightly against a sombre background of cypresses. He did not consider that his coming might be seen through those white pillars; if he had so considered he would only have reflected that his approach would be visible to the Cardinal, waiting there and admiring the priceless Venus. He did not dream that the Venus had another votary that day, one that had been begged by the Cardinal to pay a visit to the shrine of the goddess, and to await his Eminence there when his Eminence had shaken himself free from the cares of the moment. Thus, if the coming of Wogan were a surprise and

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more than a surprise to the visitor to the shrine that was expecting only the crimson robes of the Cardinal, there was a greater, because a fresher, surprise reserved for Wogan, expecting only the crimson robes of the Cardinal, when he entered the pillared precincts and found himself face to face with Clementina.

Wogan stared at the Princess, hardly knowing what to say. He had had no speech in private with her since the day at Castel-Falcone, although they had met often enough at the Cardinal's table and in the Cardinal's company. Swiftly and instantly he resolved that he would say nothing about Niemen's fate. There was no reason why Clementina should ever know of that peril. He had to break the awkward silence. The Princess was evidently waiting for him to speak, and he did speak, with no great felicity. "Well, your Highness," he said, with a false air of cheerfulness, "we have come very happily to the end of our adventure."

Clementina looked at him in a wonder. There was a word he had used which jarred harshly upon her ear, and she resented it. "Did you say happily?" she asked, and there was a wounded note in her voice which Wogan longed to sooth, yet dared not, for he persisted in thinking it wisest to persevere in his pretence. But if Clementina perceived his design, she was not willing to assist him. "I think," she said, "you have a bad memory, Charles Wogan."

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Wogan abandoned his air of assumed cheerfulness. "I shall remember some things forever," he said, very gravely.

Clementina came a little nearer to him, reached out her hand as if to touch him, although she did not touch him. "Have you forgotten," she asked, "some words we changed in the ruins of Castel-Falcone?"

Wogan did not know what to say. He had taken it for granted that the madness of Castel-Falcone was a thing to be forgotten as far as such things can ever be forgotten, that at least it was to be a secret buried between them, a secret of which neither was ever to read the least knowledge in the eyes of the other. "Your Highness—" he stammered, and could say no more, for Clementina interrupted him fiercely.

"Let us be man and woman together, Charles Wogan," she cried, "not Highness and subject; if only for the last time. Clementina and Charles. Have you forgotten Castel-Falcone?"

Wogan looked at his beautiful lady very sadly. "I have not forgotten, Clementina," he answered, earnestly.

Clementina moved restlessly up and down in the narrow space of the little pavilion. "Our lives are still in the making," she protested. "A little longer and it will be too late. Fate will have taken hold of us, flung us asunder, made me a king's wife, and sent you as a soldier of fortune, God knows where.

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We have this breathing space in which to think, to resolve, to act. What we decide now can never be changed. You understand me, Charles? You know what I mean? You do not blame me for speaking?"

Wogan saluted her very reverentially. "I understand you," he said. "God forbid that I should blame you for a frankness that honors me above all mortals. Let me say again what I said once before, when we could hear the beating of the wings of Death. Clementina, I love you."

Clementina extended her arms to him with a great cry. "And I love you," she said. "Take me away!"

Wogan forced himself to stand before her motionless, to make no response to those appealing arms, to those appealing eyes. "I will not speak to the woman I love," he said, "of the hardships of a soldier's life, of the trials, the privations the woman must endure who shares his fortunes. When a woman and man love truly such considerations do not exist."

Clementina clasped her hands tightly together and extended them to him supplicatingly. "You know my mind; you know my heart," she said. "Take me away!"

Wogan went on in the same measured tone, preserving the same restrained carriage. "I will not speak either," he said, "of the distance that divides a princess of an ancient house from an exiled Irish gentleman."

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Clementina made an impatient gesture of one that brushes aside all scruples. "Why speak of that?" she asked, impatiently. "We have passed all that, you and I. Take me away! I will go with you if you take me away."

Wogan sighed, but he did not alter his attitude of reserve. "When you speak so to me," he declared, "I seem to stand on the threshold of heaven. And yet, God help and pity me, I have more to say than just 'thank God!'"

Clementina frowned. "What have you to say?" she asked, sharply. She seemed to be impatient of his reluctance to agree with her mood and obey her wishes.

"Just this," Wogan answered; "that I serve a prince, the noblest and the most unfortunate ever. He is my dear master; I believe him to be God's chosen lieutenant. My flesh and blood, my body and my soul, are sworn to his service. What should I think of myself if I betrayed his trust? But that is nothing. The dreadful question is, what would you think of me if I betrayed his trust?"

Clementina paused in her restless walk and looked steadily at her lover. "There is no question of a broken trust," she said. "We cannot control our loves. There are other princesses in Europe. King James does not know me, does not love me. Do you think he would wish to take an unwilling bride? Ah, I think you reason too coldly for a true lover."

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Wogan's sternness of resolution was shaken by the agony in her voice. "Clementina, Clementina," he cried, "I must act in honor."

Clementina struck her hands angrily together. "Honor, honor!" she said, disdainfully; "you make an idol of honor."

Wogan pressed both his hands against his breast as if to force himself to self-command. "I am fighting against my heart's desire," he said, sadly.

Clementina came quite close to him, her face very near his face. "Do you love me?" she asked, and she asked it with her eyes as well as with her speech.

"With all my soul," Wogan answered, with the simplicity of one that utters the great truth.

Clementina drew a little way back from him and smiled triumphantly. "Then I am resolved," she declared. "Great love is a gift which comes to few, and when it comes it must be seized. You say King James is all kindness. Well, I will tell the King that I have no love to give him, and surely he will set me free."

Wogan looked at her in a wonder of doubt and hope. "The King will always do what is right," he said; "but what will the King think of me?"

Clementina seemed to feel no anxiety, to accept no discouragement, always resolved. "When I tell the King all," she insisted, "he will understand you. Say no more. I will seize happiness while it is within my reach." She was close to him again,

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now entreating him with every gesture and every sound of her voice and every glance of her eyes. Wogan surrendered, swept away by the strength of their mutual passion. He caught her in his arms.

"Dearest," he cried, "I fling aside all scruples, forget everything but that you are mine. Beloved, say again that you love me."

She looked up at him, her face radiant with joy. "I love you, Charles," she said, exultantly.

Wogan bent over her, worshipping her. "I love you, Clementina," he whispered; "I love you."

Still clinging to him, she smiled and lightly chided. "I have had to do the wooing," she complained, with the happy voice of one that had the right to rebuke her lover.

Wogan drew her closer to him. "Leave that to me now," he cried, and leaned to kiss her, when suddenly, to his surprise, she wrested herself from his embrace, and with both hands pushed him from her.

She had seen through the pillars of the pavilion what Wogan, who was turned away, could not see, the gleam through the green of crimson silk. "Hush! The Cardinal," she said. "I see the Cardinal. I think he is coming this way."

At her words Wogan turned and, following the direction of her gaze, saw what she saw, the vivid color moving through the trees. They could see

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now the Cardinal coming in their direction, moving slowly with his easy, princely gait. They said nothing further as he approached, only Clementina caught at Wogan's hand for a moment and pressed it passionately.

XXXII

THE CARDINAL CONVERSES

AS the Cardinal entered the pavilion he greeted the pair with a paternal smile, in which, however, it seemed to Wogan that there lurked something ironical. After the Princess and the Chevalier had knelt and kissed the Cardinal's ring, the Cardinal turned to the Princess. "I have good news for you," he said, "the best news in the world. His Majesty is close at hand. I have just received tidings from a courier. He is travelling at full speed from Rome. His Majesty should be here within half an hour."

As he spoke the Cardinal's bland gaze travelled from the face of the Princess to the face of the Chevalier, and back again. He seemed to be entirely obsessed by the pleasure of his tidings; he seemed to be quite unaware of the changed expression of the Princess, or the sudden gravity of Wogan. Yet Wogan, watching him still, seemed to read a kind of mocking laughter in the Cardinal's eyes and on the Cardinal's lips.

The Princess made an effort to recover her self-possession. She had flushed so furiously red and

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again gone so deadly pale at the Cardinal's news that only a preoccupied ecclesiastic could have failed to notice her confusion.

The Cardinal nodded, and taking her hand patted it gently. "The King is coming," he repeated. "I can understand your joy." He turned his head toward Wogan and continued. "Sir, will you watch for the first sight of his Majesty and let me know, that I may be ready to greet him? I have a few words to say to her Highness."

Wogan knelt to the Cardinal and kissed his ring, rose, deeply saluted the Princess, and ascending the steps of the terrace disappeared from sight.

The Cardinal looked steadily into Clementina's face. He still held her hand and caressed it gently. "This is golden news, my child," he said. "Surely you ought to be congratulated upon having a royal lover that is so ardent to behold his bride."

Clementina did not answer, she did not seem to be able to speak. The startling suddenness of the unexpected coming of the King had shaken her. She knew not what to think nor what to say. The Cardinal continued to appear entirely unconscious of her agitation. Still holding her hand, he drew her gently toward the marble seat, and the pair sat down together, the trembling, troubled woman and the quiet, suave, good-humored ecclesiastic.

The Cardinal moved a little nearer to Clementina and addressed her in a voice that was pitched in a key of the tenderest solicitude. "The star of your

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Highness's fortunes," he said, "shines high in heaven. The happy moment of your nuptials approaches. The crown of England will soon, in a sense, rest upon your forehead."

He paused for a moment, and the faintest of smiles flickered about his lips and faded away, as he thus hinted a somewhat dubious confidence in the Restoration that the Jacobites dreamed of. He began again, looking at the Princess with kindly, inquiring eyes that were so used to reading thoughts: "Yet, if I have any knowledge of women, your Highness does not seem very visibly overjoyed."

The caressing sweetness of the Cardinal's voice, the paternal sympathy of his manner, the amiability that illuminated his countenance, touched very profoundly Clementina's troubled heart. She turned almost eagerly toward the Cardinal, she stretched out her hands with a childish air of appeal, and began in a faltering voice, "If your Eminence only knew—"

The Cardinal checked her speech with a lifted finger of protest. "My child," he said, still with the same soothing gentleness, "this is no time for the confessional. Besides, there are things, many things, in this life which there is no need for those who are vexed in spirit to tell me. The poor priest has not worked all these weary years in the world for nothing."

The sound of his speech soothed Clementina's tangled nerves, the mild kindness of his com-

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passionate gaze calmed her, yet she already regretted her first temptation to tell her story, and resented the power which had tempted her. "I do not understand your Eminence," she answered, in a voice that she vainly endeavored to make steady and assured.

The Cardinal nodded his head and smiled pleasantly, as one that was willing to humor so fair and exalted a penitent. "Well, well, well!" he said. "I do not ask you to tell me any secret, especially as it may be there is no secret to tell. If I am, however weakly and unworthily, a guide to the other world, I am no less a citizen of this world, endowed by Providence in its mercy with some small powers of observation and some slight skill in drawing deductions from them."

He paused as if to watch the effect of his words upon his hearer, and Clementina gazed upon the priest in a fascinated terror. "What does your Eminence mean?" she began, and said no more.

And the Cardinal, smiling indulgently at her hesitation, took up his tale again. "Doubtless," he said, "when your Highness was a little girl you were fond of fairy tales. When I was a little boy—which is a very much longer time ago—I know that I was, and could listen to them forever and tell them with the best. It is a pity that we cannot always breathe the childish atmosphere of romance. What more natural, for instance, what more pleasant, in a fairy tale than that some fair princess, imprisoned,

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let us say, by some wicked magician, should be rescued from her captivity by some valorous and handsome young knight and should be found very susceptible to the charms of her rescuer? What more pleasant"—the Cardinal paused for a moment with his smiling regard steadily fixed upon Clementina's face, then he added, with significant emphasis—"in a fairy tale?"

Clementina could not possibly mistake the meaning of the Cardinal's speech as he sat there beaming so blandly upon her. It was plain that he knew or guessed her secret. For all that he was a great prince of the church, and a great man, she felt a sudden anger against him. "If your Eminence knows so much—" she began, hotly, but the Cardinal, as before, would not permit her to finish her sentence, and for all her anger she had scarcely the temerity to resist the command of that uplifted hand.

The Cardinal finished her sentence for her. "'Your Eminence knows more,' you would add." He nodded his head. "Surely, surely. What more natural in this fairy tale that we talk of than that the brisk young hero should entertain a lively admiration for the lady he had rescued? What more appropriate than the mutual discovery of the passion of hero for heroine and of heroine for hero? What more pretty and wilful than a romantic resolve to defy the stars and fly to hide in some distant, obscure Elysium?"

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Clementina clasped and unclasped her hands nervously as she listened to the suave words so softly spoken. She was angry with the man who could chide her thus with nursery parables, but also she was alarmed at his knowledge. "What has your Eminence heard?" she asked, almost timidly.

The Cardinal laughed a little, good-tempered laugh. It was hard for her, haggardly observing his easy, debonair manner, to imagine that he was talking serious words or meaning serious things. "I have heard nothing," he said, quietly. "It is not a question of hearing. Were my Eminence as deaf as an adder, or as quick of hearing as Fine Ear in the fairy story, it would be all one where the secret of such a pair of lovers is concerned; a secret that is no secret; a secret that betrays itself fairly and plainly to the observing eyes of a cunning old ecclesiastic like myself."

Clementina frowned. Was it, indeed, a fact that her ingenuous temperament had betrayed itself so completely that the thoughts she believed she buried in the heart of her heart, the secret that she shared with only one other and that other the man she loved, could shine so patently in her eyes and betray itself so readily to the Cardinal? "Your Eminence—" she faltered again, and could say no more, though she was eager to say much.

There was nothing menacing, nothing even faintly reproving, in the Cardinal's manner. He dis-

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coursed as affably as if he had been talking of nothing more momentous than the state of the weather.

"I can picture the pretty scene," he murmured, half closing his eyes as he spoke, as if he really saw what he spoke of so tranquilly. "Of course, the princess of our fairy tale must speak the first words, as befits her exalted station. The young gentleman that has been bound to keep silent so long is now torn between longing and honor. The pair, it may be, come to some desperate resolve."

He paused in the monotonous flow of his narrative and, opening his eyes wide again, looked at Clementina with a smile in which, perhaps, there lingered a suspicion of slyness.

Clementina flushed angrily and made as if to rise, but the Cardinal softly laid his white hand upon her arm and restrained her. His eyes were reading her face with an air of great kindness. There was no sign of anger or irony in them, yet Clementina felt that her companion was ironical, and that in his heart he was angry with her. She spoke vehemently, almost fiercely. "I will do nothing," she protested, "to be ashamed of. I will avow to him who has the right to be told."

The Cardinal's lifted hand once more checked her further speech. His smile now suggested nothing more than a playful remonstrance for some trivial error. "Did I not say," he went on, "some desperate resolve?" He emphasized a little the

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words he had already employed. He nestled back a little more cozily into the curve of the seat, folded his hands, and nodded while he spoke. "I suppose," he said, "you mean that you will tell the King that you do not love him; that your heart is wholly another's?"

Clementina drew herself up and faced her amiable antagonist steadily. "I shall speak to the King," she said. "I shall tell the King the truth."

The Cardinal's smile widened, the Cardinal's eye gleamed with a hint of good-natured malice. He spoke now with a slightly drawling voice, as if he were growing drowsy in the warm air, and his words came lulling. "'What is truth?' asked the Roman pro-consul seventeen centuries ago, and the world has been trying to answer the question ever since." He clasped and unclasped his fingers lazily, and looked at his ring, as if he had forgotten what he was about to say, and had lost all interest in the conversation. Then suddenly he continued, still in the same sleepy tone: "My daughter, what you propose to do would be quite delightful in a fairy tale where the beautiful young Princess of the Blue Mountains declares to the Emperor of the Pink Islands, to whom she is betrothed, that she loves and is beloved by some Captain Fracassa with a large heart, a long sword, and a lean wallet."

Clementina frowned impatiently at this patent travesty of her cause, but the Cardinal took no notice of her impatience.

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"Monsieur Perrault or Madame D'Aulnoy," he continued, "would make pleasant conceits out of such a fiction, and happy children would clap their hands at it." He gave a little, gentle sigh and resumed: "But we are not children, your Highness, and it is not given to us always or often to be happy. Moreover, we do not believe in fairy tales."

His eyes had been opened very wide as he pointed the moral of the parable. Now he lowered his lids again and seemed waiting for Clementina to say something.

"Why," she asked, sadly, "should I deny myself happiness if happiness be within my reach?"

The Cardinal shook his head. "Who," he asked, "can say with surety that happiness is within his reach?"

"None," Clementina answered, firmly; "but some may believe it and act upon the belief."

The Cardinal caressed the gold cross upon his breast. "I will not," he said, "tease your Highness with trite insistence upon duty, for though duty be the meed of kings and subjects, you would perhaps believe that an exception should be made in the case of beautiful and high-spirited young women."

Clementina turned and interrupted the Cardinal. "Why," she asked, fiercely, "should I be sacrificed to duty?"

The Cardinal gave a few seconds to silence, as if he were meditating this question, then he answered,

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dryly, "Your Highness was mighty willing to be sacrificed until you met your gallant cavalier."

The stroke was a shrewd one, but Clementina answered him frankly and fiercely. She was resolved to say the most and the best she could for herself and for her cause. "Because," she replied, "until I met him I did not know what life might mean. Now I do know, and I mean to act upon the knowledge."

The Cardinal brought his fine hands together a few times in noiseless applause. He seemed more amiable than ever, more interested, more ready to be indulgent. There was nothing in his manner that could reasonably irritate his companion. "Certainly," he said, "certainly. But just let us reason together a little. There is never any harm in two good friends having a quiet chat over some difficult problem, and we, I am glad to believe, are very good friends. If I should fail to convince you, there is always the possibility that you may succeed in convincing me. You ask me why you should deny yourself happiness if happiness be within your reach?"

"Yes," Clementina answered, firmly.

"Are you very sure," the Cardinal questioned, "that happiness is within your reach?"

"Sure," Clementina answered, emphatically.

The Cardinal continued to smile placidly, and his voice had a cheerful quality that made any suggestion of a homily in his speech very faint and

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far away. "I admit, of course," he said, "that mortals have a right under certain conditions to seek happiness, and I regret after a long experience of this world that so few attain to it. Still, in pursuit of one's own happiness, one must not wholly neglect the happiness of others."

"I think, your Eminence," Clementina said, softly, "that in this case my happiness would mean the happiness of another."

The Cardinal laughed outright. "Ah, yes," he said; "our young Fracassa. But I was thinking of another, whose happiness for the moment you seem to have forgotten."

Clementina shot a swift glance at the Cardinal, whose face was as amiably inscrutable as ever. "You mean his Majesty?" she said.

"I mean his Majesty," the Cardinal answered, and said no more.

Clementina paused for a moment before speaking, as if carefully considering her ground, and then spoke. "Surely," she said, "you do not pretend that his Majesty's happiness is at stake in this matter? His Majesty has never seen me. His Majesty was ready to marry any one of half a dozen princesses that I could name to your Eminence were not their names already familiar to you."

The Cardinal nodded his head in agreement, but he said nothing, and Clementina went on: "It may give his Majesty some slight trouble to set about a political wooing again, but no more so

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than if I had been unable to get away from the castle of Innspruck. His Majesty would not have waited unmarried—I know he would not have been allowed to wait unmarried—if I had been kept in captivity for many years.” She paused for a moment. Still the Cardinal nodded; still the Cardinal said nothing. Clementina went on afresh: “I am sure from all I have heard of his Majesty that his is too proud and generous a spirit to compel a woman to wed him against her will. I will tell the King all the truth, and I am sure that the King will set me free.”

“Remember,” said the Cardinal, slowly, with the manner of one who utters an important argument, “that you are losing the crown of England.”

A faint smile for a moment stirred the gravity of Clementina’s face. “Is the crown of England such a certainty?” she asked, quietly.

The Cardinal made a vague gesture of his hands. “Nothing in this life is certain, my daughter,” he answered, “but at least you are throwing away a great chance. You are losing the right to be called a queen.”

“I would rather,” Clementina answered, vehemently, “be the wife of the man I love than be the queen of the world.”

The Cardinal sighed profoundly. “Very excellent sentiments,” he said, “very prettily expressed. Well, I suppose if you feel so strongly on the matter there is nothing else to be said, nothing else to be

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done." He made as if to rise, and then seemed to change his mind. "Still," he said, "I am sorry for King James."

"Why are you sorry for King James?" Clementina questioned. "Do you think he loses so much in losing me?"

"Surely," said the Cardinal, with a frankly admiring glance at the girl; "but for the moment I was thinking of other afflictions which your action will bring down upon him. Think how heavy the humiliation you inflict upon him, how you outrage his pride, how you delight his enemies."

"That might be so," Clementina argued, "if I left him unawares, but not if I tell him the truth, and he sets me free of his own accord."

"Let us assume as much," the Cardinal agreed. "Yet none the less you will have made him cut a very ridiculous figure." Here the Cardinal chuckled a little, as if in spite of himself. The comicality of the situation seemed to tickle him.

Clementina looked annoyed and puzzled. "It is never ridiculous to be magnanimous," she asserted.

The Cardinal shrugged his shoulders. "I am afraid," he said, "that the malevolent world would always regard as ridiculous the sovereign whose plighted bride jilts him for a barrack-room paladin."

Clementina now frowned in very earnest. "Eminence!" she cried, in angry protest.

The Cardinal smiled apologetically. "I am only," he said, "voicing the world's words. People

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will say unkind things of you. People will say unkind things of your paladin. For myself, I have the highest respect and esteem for the Chevalier Wogan."

Clementina clasped her hands together. "He is indeed a splendid gentleman," she cried, enthusiastically.

"He is splendid enough," the Cardinal agreed, "and he is very certainly a gentleman, but he has not the right to marry a royal princess."

"I am told," Clementina asserted, proudly, "that he is descended from the kings of his own country."

"I have met," said the Cardinal, pleasantly, "a very large number of Irish gentlemen, and I have found, without exception, that they all claim descent from their country's kings, but the claim is one scarcely serious enough to be considered in the case of a lady of a recognized royal house."

"He is good enough for me," Clementina said, simply, as if that settled the matter.

The Cardinal nodded, as if he seemed to think so too. When he spoke it was as if to express a sudden afterthought. "But if you are prepared," he said, "to make the King ridiculous, to plunge your own family into mourning, and to have your name the theme of every lewd pamphleteer and ballad-monger in Europe—if you are prepared for all this in your pursuit of happiness, and I take it that you are so prepared—" He paused interrogatively.

Clementina answered vaguely. "I think your

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Eminence much exaggerates the consequences of my act."

The Cardinal went on: "If you are prepared for all the calamities I have enumerated, are you prepared for the consequences to the companion of your whimsical adventure?"

Clementina looked startled. "What consequences?" she asked, anxiously.

The Cardinal looked pleased. "The Chevalier did not mention them?" he said. "I expected as much. He is a very honorable gentleman that could not speak of his own danger. But I that am his friend and your friend am bound to no such reticence."

Clementina looked at the Cardinal with bright alarm in her eyes. "What dangers are there for him?" she asked, fiercely.

"There are many," the Cardinal answered, quickly. "Let us take first a very probable supposition—namely, that your excellent father, not seeing your adventure with the eyes of a headstrong youth, may demand the arrest of your lover. That demand would probably be acceded to by any court in Europe, and the arrest would undoubtedly be followed by your lover's execution and your own sequestration in a convent."

"His execution!" Clementina gasped, suddenly grown white, and taking no heed of the menace to herself.

"Of course," the Cardinal asserted. "It is no

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less than treason for one that is not of royal blood to marry clandestinely with the daughter of a royal house."

"There are royal houses and royal houses," Clementina said, impatiently. "You know very well that we are not great enough nor rich enough nor powerful enough to make much of a pother about."

The Cardinal eyed her admiringly. "You argue ingeniously," he said, "but let me remind you that your family were great enough and rich enough and powerful enough to provide a bride for the King of England."

"A king who is no king," Clementina said, doggedly, as one that is determined to use any weapon in defence.

"My child," said the Cardinal, "it does not become you or me to admit as much. James the Third is King of England by the grace of God, and no factious act of a rebellious people, no installation of a usurping Elector of Hanover, can affect his divine right."

Clementina said nothing, having indeed nothing to say, and the Cardinal continued: "However, let us assume the hard assumption that your father would be willing to sit still and say nothing while you went your way with your lover. What would your lover's future life be like after you had proclaimed him to all the world as a traitor to his King?"

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"Charles Wogan is no traitor!" the Princess interrupted, passionately. Her eyes flashed, her hands were clenched; she showed a high passion.

"I believe so, too, at this present," the Cardinal replied, calmly. "But you will make him a traitor if you suffer him to become your lover. Just think of it! His Majesty believed Charles Wogan to be an honorable gentleman and trustworthy and faithful servant. In that belief he employs him on a delicate and dangerous mission. He intrusts him with the task of finding him a bride. He confides to him the care of that lady's life. He expects him to bring that lady in safety to his presence. Even if the tale be told as you would have it told, it will be held by all the world that this gentleman, so deeply trusted, so highly honored, betrayed his master's trust, wronged his master's honor, and stole his master's promised wife."

"He cannot help loving me," Clementina murmured, sadly.

"Of course not," the Cardinal admitted, candidly; "who could? But he could and should keep his love to himself."

"It was I who told him," Clementina insisted, fiercely. "If there be fault or folly, the fault and folly are mine."

"I admit," the Cardinal said, "that you made his duty very difficult for the young gentleman, but he should not have found it impossible to deny himself."

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"He did as long as he could," Clementina pleaded, vehemently. "He only spoke because I made him speak."

"Well," said the Cardinal, "let us consider this man's future for a little. He's a soldier. His business and his pleasure in life is the soldier's trade. Suppose that you and he do as you wish, where shall he hereafter find service? Not in France, not in Spain, not in Austria. In all these countries Irish gentlemen are very welcome, but not an Irishman who has betrayed and dishonored his King. I think the only country that would accept his services is England, for the present English Government would welcome any man that had done a mischief to James Stuart. Would it please you to see the Chevalier Wogan wearing the uniform of the Elector of Hanover?"

Clementina gave a great cry at the Cardinal's words, and thrust out her hands before her, as if to push away a sudden and unexpected danger. "My God!" she cried; "that is impossible." She sat for a moment silent, facing the phantoms that the Cardinal had evoked, thinking wild thoughts. Then she said, slowly: "After all, he need not remain a soldier. We can live away from the world, content with each other. I have money; my jewels would fetch a large sum."

The Cardinal answered her, still in the same voice of gentle banter that he had preserved from the beginning of the interview. "Would you," he asked,

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as one that asks a half-amusing question—"would you have Charles Wógan live in idleness on the bounty of the wife that he had stolen from his master?"

It seemed to Clementina for the moment that she was prepared to accept any humiliation for herself that would leave her free for the man she loved, and liberate her from the bondage to which she now felt that she was being delivered. But the thought of humiliation for her lover, the thought that the world would have a right to deride and to despise him, shook her spirit and stung her pride. She turned to the Cardinal wistfully. She saw his smiling, bland face through a mist of tears. "What am I to do?" she asked, pathetically.

The Cardinal spread out his fine hands as if he were putting aside any responsibility, any authority. "That you must decide for yourself," he said, affably. "Your good head must come to the help of your good heart. All I have done, all that I felt it necessary for me to do, is to set forth some of the perils and vexations that must beset you if you break away from the path that has been laid down for you. I have no doubt that you will meet me with the question, what are perils and vexations to young love? And I know that the question seems hard to answer to young lovers. But young love will not last forever; it will grow cold in time—it may even turn to hate."

"That could never happen," Clementina said,

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doggedly. "A love like mine is a love that lasts forever."

The Cardinal laughed gently. "Ah, my daughter!" he said. "You are very young and very inexperienced. I have seen in my time many a heady passion that blazed like a furnace, wane and wither and die down into cold ashes. I have seen many a hand once clasped in friendship lifted in hate. When the first joy of the friendship was over, do you not think that your companion would begin to feel his degradation and begin to resent the cause of it? No man that has been a soldier can bear to be regarded as an outlaw with whom no honest or honorable man will consort. Indeed, my child, I do not see great certainty of happiness for you in this proposed adventure, and I see very surely great certainty of unhappiness for the man."

The Cardinal leaned back against the arm of the marble seat and smiled kindly at the Princess. The same air of genial sympathy that he had worn all through their conversation still reigned on his good-natured features. Had an observer been by, that observer would have believed that the Cardinal had just finished his share in the pleasantest talk in the world. But such an observer would have judged differently as regards the Princess. Her eyes were full of tears, her cheeks were very pale, her hands were tightly clenched, and it was evident that only by a strong effort could she restrain herself from falling into a passionate fit of weeping. She said

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nothing, and the smiling Cardinal said nothing, and the silence seemed to last a long while, though, indeed, it was only to be counted by seconds.

Clementina knew now in her heart that what the Cardinal said was true. Her native shrewdness came to the rescue of her sentiment, and dissipated the tinted vapors of her dream. Like one that peers into a magic glass and reads therein the future, she saw herself and her lover living in a miserable obscurity, drifting from one country to another in unlovely vagabondage, hated or disdained by all whose love and esteem would be desirable, friendless save for friends that would be worse than enemies. She saw the man, her companion, chafing at the indignity to which their madness had committed him, fretting for the life of action that he was forever denied, growing bitterer with the growing years and the keen sense of his humiliation, ceasing to find consolation in love, ceasing, it may be, to love. What must a soldier feel that is condemned to sit at home in inglorious ease while from all the quarters of the globe the trumpets of war are calling?

As clearly as Clementina had seen before that her duty was to tell the King her secret and throw herself upon his mercy, so now as clearly she saw that she must keep her cruel secret to the end, and pursue her allotted course without a murmur or a sign to betray her breaking heart. She turned to the Cardinal with dry eyes and steady lips.

"Your Eminence," she said, slowly and com-

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posedly, "is a wise man. Your Eminence knows the world and its ways. I am no better than a child that looks from its nursery window upon the great procession of life that passes by. But the child has learned her lesson, and you need not fear that she will forget."

The Cardinal leaned forward and gently patted Clementina's hands. "You will do your duty, my daughter," he said, softly.

And Clementina answered, "I will do my duty."

The Cardinal leaned back with the very faintest sigh of satisfaction, and Clementina sat looking before her and wondering how she could bear what must befall her.

The silence was broken by a man's approaching footsteps. Wogan appeared at the head of the terrace and, descending the steps, addressed the Cardinal. "Your Eminence," he said, "his Majesty has been sighted on the road, and will be here in a few minutes."

The Cardinal rose. "I will go and greet his Majesty," he said. "I am rejoiced to be able to welcome so great and good a prince under my poor roof. Attend upon her Highness till I return." He bent over the Princess and rested his hand for a moment upon her head as if in benediction. "You are to be envied, child," he said, in a soft voice, and then turning he moved slowly across the grass and up the terrace steps and disappeared, a shimmering figure in crimson silk among the trees. Wogan and the Princess were again left alone,

XXXIII

IT WAS ALL FOR OUR RIGHTFUL KING

WOGAN knew from the look on Clementina's face before she spoke a word that the world had changed for him. "Madam," he began, and then paused, uncertain what to say, swayed by the great doubt and the great fear which had so suddenly come upon him. As for Clementina, she sat very steady and still, with her hands straight by her sides, and her gaze fixed with a wistful earnestness upon the face of her lover. All the silence of that summer day seemed suddenly to break into a multitude of noises in contrast with the gripping stillness that seemed to reign around the pair. The trembling of the leaves, the breath of the breeze, the swift movement of birds from bough to bough, all these faint and hitherto imperceptible sounds seemed now to reverberate with something like terrific import. This lasted for a few moments, and then Clementina spoke. At the sound of her voice the world became itself again for her and for him.

"Friend," she began, and then repeated the word lovingly, "friend, I must bid you good-bye."

Wogan knew that if he could see himself he would

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find that he was deadly pale and that he showed a fear he had never shown in danger. Certain of what was to come, he yet dreaded to have that certainty confirmed by words, and he wished the pause that Clementina made might endure forever.

"We have been dreaming dreams," Clementina went on, "and I have been a very foolish young woman, and fancied myself still in the nursery, where I could play out my fairy tales to the happy ending of my fancy. But I can do no such thing, I find, and there is nothing left for it but to say good-bye."

"What has the Cardinal said?" Wogan asked, dully. The sound of his voice startled him, it seemed so unnatural and so hard, and the question seemed foolish, yet in the desperation of his despair he could think of nothing else to say.

"The Cardinal has said very little," Clementina answered, "only he has made me aware that I cannot in honor do what my heart would have me do, and that I must fulfil my destiny and follow my duty with what faith and patience I may."

Wogan was at a loss what to say. He knew that the Princess was in the right, and that he would do shamefully ill to seek to dissuade her. Also he felt strangely sure that she had made up her mind and was not to be dissuaded, though he spoke with the tongue of men and of angels. "Is your Highness sure?" he asked, with the grave simplicity which the situation seemed to need, and he felt the sig-

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nificance of the change that had come over them in his immediate return to the formal address.

Clementina inclined her head in wistful affirmation. "I am quite sure," she said. "What I wish to do is wholly impossible. You, who are a soldier, would never do what you believe to be a dishonorable deed. Well, you would not have me stoop to dishonor, neither. It is my duty to keep faith with the King, and if my heart breaks in the doing, that is no more than by the way. Am I not right, friend?"

Wogan could not speak. Wogan dared not trust himself to speak. He felt that if he allowed his tongue liberty he must needs make wild protestations, wild entreaties, do all that he should not do. So he only listened in silence, with lowered head.

The Princess understood his silence. "I shall always remember," Clementina went on, "the days and hours and minutes and seconds of our wonderful adventure. I shall always think of you as the noblest gentleman I have ever known. I hope you will always think kindly of me. Good-bye."

Wogan took Clementina's hand and kissed it. The wildest thoughts seemed to be whirling in his brain. He felt as a man feels that dreams a hideous dream and knows it, even while he is in the throes of it, to be a dream and no reality, and strives in great agony to break away from its oppression, and cannot, for a while at least, succeed, and at last wakes with a cry and a sweat of terror upon

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him. Surely, Wogan's troubled fancy seemed to suggest—surely this sorrow is nothing but a dream, and I shall wake again to joy and hope and promise. Then as he lifted his eyes to the face of the Princess and saw the tragic calmness that reigned there, he knew that the thing was real, that the hour of renunciation and parting had struck, and that the best of life was ended. He drew himself up and saluted Clementina. "Farewell, Princess," he said, quietly; "farewell, sweet lady."

Each stood looking at the other in silence for a few seconds, then the stillness was broken by the sound of approaching footsteps, and the Cardinal appeared on the terrace in the company of a stately gentleman in black.

Without another word to Wogan, without another look at Wogan, the Princess quitted the pavilion and advanced to meet her husband. Wogan, after a moment's pause, followed her at a little distance. Suddenly Clementina came to a halt, as if she could go no farther, and Wogan halted, too, and waited for what must be.

The girl stood very still, with beating heart, as the men advanced slowly toward her down the sunlit avenue. The brightness of the day, the beauty of the surroundings, the vivid crimson of the Cardinal's coat, seemed to intensify the gravity of the Prince's carriage and the sombreness of his attire. He was clad for the most part in black raiment, only relieved by his blue ribbon and by the brilliancy

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of his George. As he moved slowly toward the Princess her agitation seemed to increase at that air of sadness which habitually sat upon the noble features of the Prince, a sadness which even the importance of the occasion seemed scarcely to dissipate. The girl's blood seemed to grow colder as that grave, sable figure drew nearer and nearer, and the tumult of many troubled and conflicting thoughts disturbed her brain.

James was quite near to his bride before he altered the steady sobriety of his deportment or allowed his face to soften from its habitual pensive expression. But when he was close to Clementina he stepped briskly from the Cardinal's side to greet her, and as he did so his features softened into the sweet smile which they so seldom wore, but which, when he showed it, seemed to transform his countenance and lend it an appealing beauty. As he smiled his welcome James caught the hand of Clementina and kissed it, kneeling on one knee as he did so.

Immediately the Princess strove to raise him. "Sire," she said, "it is not fit that the King of England should kneel to me."

James rose slowly and still smiled, scrutinizing her face the while with kindly, admiring eyes. "Dear lady," he answered, "it is not the King of England who kneels, but the fortunate and grateful lover. How can I ever thank you for all the perils you have encountered and the pains you have

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endured in order to make me the happiest of men?"

"Sire, sire," Clementina stammered, scarcely knowing what to say.

But James continued, unheeding her interruption, with the gracious gravity of one that has well weighed his words and knows them to be apt and seasonable. "I can well understand," he said, "how eager my enemies have been to keep us apart. In keeping me from my kingdom of England they might well believe they had done their worst for me, but when they found that Heaven was prepared to grant me a recompense for all my griefs and all my losses in endowing me with the companionship of so incomparable a Princess, their fury and their malice may well have prompted them to deprive me of the gift that would atone for all."

It was strange to the girl standing there with aching heart to listen to the precise, formal, and measured words of the Prince, which nevertheless, for all their precision and all their formality, rang strangely earnest and true. Indeed, the exiled King spoke from the heart of his heart to the woman who had come so far to marry him, and Clementina, recognizing this, strove resolutely to forget the insistent regret that fretted her. She stared at him steadily, sharply conscious of the sadness that seemed to encompass him, of his dark habit, of his face so careworn, so poignantly pa-

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thetic now with the contrasting smile which reigned upon it. She felt helplessly vexed with the warm sunlight all about that seemed to suggest joy that could never be for her. The Cardinal was plainly in the right; it was not possible, not honorable, for her to add another sorrow to the many sorrows of this unhappy Prince. If she could lighten his life, ease his labors, lessen his cares, she would at least be doing a worthy work in the world, she would be taking up a task that was fitted for a daughter of her ancient house. She smiled wistfully at James, and began to stammer out one of the little English phrases which she had learned on her journey for the purpose of addressing her husband in his own tongue. "Sire," she said, "I will do my best to make you a dutiful wife." Then, as she finished the few words which came so quaintly from her lips, memory and emotion were too much for her, and she burst into a flood of tears.

James stood embarrassed, uncertain what to do, puzzled by her mood. As he hesitated the Cardinal glided swiftly forward and took the trembling, sobbing girl in his arms. "Her joy is too much for her Highness," he said, confidently. "Yonder is the Chevalier Wogan, Sire, that brought you this fair bride. Favor him with a few words while her Highness is recovering herself."

The King seemed relieved by the suggestion of the Cardinal. There was a certain unexpected quality of shyness in him that made him awkward in

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the presence of a weeping girl. He made a sign to Wogan, who hastened to approach.

King James addressed Wogan very friendly. "Sir," he said, "it is not much that one of my fortunes can do to reward those who risk their lives in his service. We waste our days in exile, far from our rightful dominions, and we have not the power to confer on those who love us, and whom we love, such gifts as would become their services and our royal bounty. But, at least, it still remains to us as the fountain of honor to accord to our loving and loyal subjects some proof of our sovereign pleasure."

He bade Wogan kneel; then James drew his sword and laid it lightly on his shoulder. "Arise, Sir Charles Wogan," he said. When Wogan had risen the King continued. "Whatever his misfortunes, the King must be counted happy to command such a servant."

Wogan murmured some inarticulate thanks, hardly knowing what he said or wished to say. James did not notice or did not heed the hesitation of his follower, for his attention was now called away by the Cardinal.

"Sire," he said, "see how her Highness now shines upon you, all sunshine after gentle rain."

Indeed, Clementina had recovered quickly from her unconquerable fit of weeping, and she now showed her consort a smiling face. James was visibly pleased that a wholly unblamable paroxysm

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of natural emotion had worked itself out. He advanced toward his bride where she stood alone, no longer needing the support of the Cardinal's arms.

"Dear lady," he said, "I fear that the sun is something too sultry out here for one that has suffered so much for my sake. Pray you, permit me to conduct you to the palace."

He took her hand as he spoke, kissed it very courteously, and then, still holding it with a stately tenderness, he led her, unresisting, toward the Cardinal's palace, discoursing on the way wisely and soberly as to the good he and she would do together for their distracted people of England when the Restoration that was now inevitable should be an accomplished fact. Clementina answered his Majesty with monosyllables of agreement, and thus pleasantly conversing the royal pair passed out of sight.

The Cardinal turned to Wogan. "Sir Charles," he said, "I have formed a great regard for you, and it concerns me to believe that our Italian air is far from wholesome for you. If I may be permitted the privilege of voicing the friendship I feel for you, I should earnestly advise you to try the experiment of travelling in other lands for a considerable time."

Wogan looked steadily at the Cardinal and answered him with a straightforward simplicity. "I am wholly of one mind with your Eminence."

XXXIV

THE FATE OF THE FOUR

FATE that had united four Irish gentlemen in such a famous adventure never brought them together again in any like enterprise. Gaydon and O'Toole remained in the service of France, and in that service Gaydon passed away in peaceful old age, a lieutenant-colonel of Dillon's in the year of the Forty-Five, the year when the young Prince of Wales that was afterward Charles the Third made his heroic attempt, that for a breathing-time promised success, to regain his alienated kingdom. O'Toole, the great-hearted and great-limbed, knew many years of not untempestuous happiness with his Jane, and died in action, a captain of Grenadiers, in the last battle fought between the troops of France and the troops of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, on the Moselle, in 1737.

Wogan decided to seek service in Spain, and this decision was shared by Misset, who accompanied Sir Charles to that country, where Irish soldiers of fortune were made no less welcome than in France, in 1719. They were received with great kindness by Philip the Fifth, who gave them high rank in his

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army. Misset died Governor of Oran in Barbary in 1733, and his widow retired to Barcelona, where a few years later she was joined by the widow of O'Toole, and there the two women ended their days.

The end of Charles Wogan was appropriate to his wandering, eventful, chivalrous life. He rendered Spain good service against the infidels of Barbary, and was rewarded for that service after 1733 by being appointed Governor of the Province of La Mancha, in Spain, famous as the scene of the adventures of the illustrious Don Quixote, with whose nobility and devotion Charles Wogan had so much in common. It was about this time that Sir Charles made bold to enter into correspondence with the renowned Dean Swift, and even those that are most familiar with the following letter in the pages of O'Halloran's *History of Dillon's will*, perhaps, be ready to pardon its repetition here. It is undated, but it must have been written soon after the appointment to the governorship of La Mancha. It runs thus:

“DEAR MR. DEAN—Will you pardon a poor Irish soldier of fortune if he, being a total stranger to you, still ventures to address you and to offer you his heartfelt thanks for the services you have been pleased to render to his country. It is many years now since I saw the land of my birth; it is as certain as anything may be esteemed certain in this whimsical world that I shall never again see Irish

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land. There are many in like case with me, gentlemen of honesty and honor, that must needs leave their bones abroad in foreign earth, and that must wish with my Lord Lucan, as they spend their last breath, that it were given for Ireland. I am not so much a rough soldier that I have not some knowledge of the Dean of St. Patrick's, and of all that he has done for a country that has been so cruelly abused. You, sir, are, if I may be allowed to say it, a great man. Your own knowledge of that fact needs no assurance from an exile to support it, but your greatness will no more disdain my gratitude than the sun disdains the tribute of the flower that expands under his beams.

"There is little likelihood that my name ever will have reached your ears. If by any chance it has done so, it will be on account of a service which three other gentlemen of my race, with myself, were able to render to his Majesty King James, a service which is known to the curious as the Affair of Innspruck. It took place a good time ago, but I can assure your reverence that I seem to grow young again as I think of it. After a long experience of arms in many parts of the world, and latest in Barbary, I am now settled in a government in Spain, my little kingdom being that very province of La Mancha which has been rendered so familiar to the world by the ingenuity of the esteemed Cervantes. If I die here, perhaps, at least, it may be said of me that I died at my post.

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"I am taking the liberty of sending you a small parcel of the wine of my province, which is esteemed excellent drinking by those that are familiar with it. I also, more daring than the angels, presume to send a few compositions of my own, both in prose and verse, which, if they do but serve to divert a moment of your leisure, will have served their turn. They are only to be viewed as trifles, the rare idlenesses of a life that has always been busy and that has tasted great happiness.

"I am, dear Mr. Dean, with the profoundest respect and gratitude

"Your obedient servant,

"CHARLES WOGAN (Knight-Baronet)."

Wogan did die in his government of La Mancha, and he did die at his post. The splendid adventurer could have found no fitter place to end his journey than the country which is haunted by the memory of the greatest of all knights-errant. Of Wogan, as of Cervantes' hero, it may be said that he was fearless, chivalrous, and loyal to his dreams. Of Wogan, as of Malory's Sir Lancelot, it may be said that he was the truest lover, of a sinful man, that ever loved woman.

THE END

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